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THE NOTION OF EXPERIENCE

AMBIGUITY OF THE TERM "EXPERIENCE"

ALTHOUGH many could be found who would vigorously affirm the importance of experience in learning and education, few there are who would be able to definite it without vagueness and ambiguity. Experience has been called a weasel word.[1] It has many different meanings for many different people. Some of these meanings are so similar as to be almost synonymous; others are so contradictory as to be almost mutually exclusive. In its widest conception, experience is adequated to the whole of reality; to all that was, is and shall be; to ignorance, knowledge and imagination. This seems to make experience the most universal of all concepts, a reality coterminous with everything, distinct from nothing. "It is in this all-inclusive sense that experience is said to be the central term in the philosophy of John Dewey when it functions as

[1] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, (Chicago, 1925), p. 1.

mind does for Hegel, *substance* for Spinoza, or *being* for Aquinas or Aristotle." [2] In a narrower sense, men speak of mystical and religious experience, of aesthetic experience, of sense and intellectual experience. Many would make experience so limited as to be something only intensely personal—private and subjective experience. In popular usage the word generally signifies wisdom or skill in knowing, doing or making. We have our panels of experts on radio and television. We speak of expert politicians, mathematicians, musicians and the like. It seems that experience is more connotative of "knowing how" than "knowing why"; but in current parlance the term is used indiscriminately. Whatever way it is conceived by the majority of men, experience always seems to imply a knowledge or skill derived from direct personal impressions, from trials, sufferings or the actual living through of events. In this sense, the meaning of experience is closely akin to its etymological signification.

Etymological Meaning of Experience

Looking at the root of the English term "experience," we find that it derives from the Greek word "*empiria*" (*ἐμπειρία*), and the Latin word "*experientia*," or "*experimentum*." In the Latin verb form, to experience (*experiri*) means to try, to put to the test, to prove. St. Thomas and many classical authors use the word in this sense, making it synonymous with proving or testing. "To test (*tentare*) is, in the proper sense, to make a trial (*experimentum*) of something. Now we make trial of something in order to know something about it; hence the immediate end of every tester is knowledge." [3] The observation of everyday life provides many instances of the conception of experience as a trying or testing whose proximate purpose is the attainment of knowledge. The small child feels, touches, handles and manipulates objects in his environment in order that he might come to know them. By means of his senses, it is not

[2] Mortimer J. Adler, Ed. *The Great Ideas, A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*, (Chicago, 1952), I, p. 469.

[3] I, Q. 114, a. 2.

long before he learns that hot things burn, that sharp things hurt, that not all things are edible. By experience he learns the shape, size, hardness and position of things in space. He learns the hard way, the way of trial and error, a way in which progress is necessarily slow for it includes much fumbling and stumbling and repetition. The etymological meaning of the term " experience " as a trying or testing is verified in the explanation of the true nature of experience by Aristotle and St. Thomas.

Experience According to Aristotle and St. Thomas

Experience, says St. Thomas, is the result of " the comparison of many singular things received in memory." [4] The process takes place in this fashion. The external senses are stimulated by external objects of environment. The impression of such objects on the sense organs produces sensation. The internal senses are then brought into play. Common sense (*sensus communis*) distinguishes the qualitative differences in external sensation, selecting, combining and organizing them into a pattern. These sensations are transmitted to the imagination, where they are stored as images or phantasms and from which they can be recalled by memory as past products of sense experience. In this way, man is able to know objects in the external world even when they are no longer impinging on the external senses. From many memories of diverse objects, which are similar in some fashion, experience results. Hence, experience, says the Angelic Doctor, " seems to be nothing other than to receive something from many things retained in memory." [5] Sense and memory, therefore, cause experience, for out of sensation arises memory; next, out of memory of the same often repeated sensation arises experience, since many remembrances are summed up into one experience.

Aristotle illustrates the genesis of experience by likening it to an army in full rout. First, one runaway soldier stops in his

[4] In I Met. 1.
[5] In II Anal. Post., 20.

flight and stands to battle the enemy; then another takes his place by his side, then a third, until a cluster has been formed about this one steadfast soldier.[6] In a similar manner is experience generated. Sensations, of themselves, are dispersive and decentralized. They pass through the senses with amazing rapidity—mixed and shifting, with varying degrees of intensity. One sensation is firmly impressed upon the memory; another, similar in some way to the first, associates itself with the first; then another and another and another until the numerically distinct sensations form an experience. It would be erroneous, however, to assume from this example that experience consists in a mere aggregate or an accumulation of sensations.

Material and Formal Element in Experience

Two elements concur in the formation of experience, one, material; the other, formal. The material element comprises the images or species retained in imagination and subject to recall by memory. It is immediately evident, therefore, that while all sense experience arises from sensation, it goes beyond sensation in that it does not refer exclusively to particular objects here and now present, as all sensations do. Hence those animals, lacking the full equipment of the external and internal senses, will be prohibited from realizing the fullness of experience. Thus the shellfish and other lower forms of animal life which derive their subsistence from contact with their immediate environment have little or nothing of imaginal power. Lacking imagination, they also lack memory and hence are not able to profit by past experience. Indeed, they have no need of imagination and memory for all things necessary for their sustenance and propagation are immediately at hand. For those higher animals who are capable of memory, the mere addition of unrelated sensations in imagination, the pooling of a heterogeneous mass of disparate images can never constitute an experience. In experience there is a before and after, a retrospect and a prospect, a foresight gathered from a hindsight,

[6] *Ibid.*, 19.

a connection between past and present. In short, experience is unified and integrated. For example, in a crucial period of a baseball game, an experienced pitcher confers with his catcher and teammates to determine whether or not a particular batsman should be given a base on balls. He knows from past experience with the same or similarly skilled batsmen that there is a great danger of losing the game if he should attempt to pitch to him. Since no one situation is totally identical with another, he must draw upon his many memories of similar cases in the past and confer with his fellow players before he comes to a decision. This comparing of past and present, this connecting and relating of memories, which results in a judgment about a particular thing constitutes the formal element in experience.

The essence of experience, therefore, would seem to consist in the collation or comparison of many memories. As comparison implies the existence of at least two or more facts; so also experience demands the presence of many memories. Moreover, these facts in memory do not exist in isolation, nor are they dissociated, unrelated and independent of each other; rather they are stabilized around a core, merged into a unit, interrelated, interdependent and integrated to form one apperceptive mass. It is in comparison, the formal element in experience, that we find the verification of the etymological meaning of experience. Experience is truly a testing and trying, a sifting and sorting, a rejection of irrelevant images and a selection and combination of those phantasms connected with the object under investigation. The work of associating, combining and comparing relevant phantasms is attributed to a special faculty in men called the cogitative sense.

The Faculty of Experience: The Cogitative Power

According to its etymological signification, the cogitative power may be considered as a power which drives, or constantly moves things together with one another in order to make one

out of many.[7] This nominal definition of the cogitative power coincides with conception of experience explained by St. Thomas as the unification or integration of many singulars received in memory. The process of comparison resulting in the integration of memories is something peculiar to man. In his *Commentary* on the *First Book of the Metaphysics* (lect. 1), St. Thomas explains this chief characteristic of experience by contrasting it with the sense cognition of animals and the discursive process of reason. The animals that are zoologically inferior are restricted to the reception of singular impressions happening here and now, they cannot retain these impressions except when these latter have been very strong, and even then only for a short time, nor can they integrate them and make use of them for future conduct. In them (e. g. the shellfish), we find sensation without a distinct imagination and so without memory. They cannot profit from experience because their experience is confined within the narrow limits of sensation. The higher animals, however, easily retain and conserve past impressions in the memory for a length of time; consequently, cognition in these animals is not limited to the actually present impression, but synthesizing past impressions they can provide for the future, as if these animals in some way were rational. Thus St. Thomas observes: "Because from many sensations and memory animals become accustomed to seek or avoid something, hence it is that they seem to share something of experience, even though but little." [8] Indeed, insofar as they provide in some way for the future, animals are said to possess a kind of prudence.

Strictly speaking, prudence proceeds from a reasonable deliberation about what ought to be done; as such it is found only in man. By way of some instinct of nature, however, brutes possess a natural estimation of those things which are suitable or harmful to them. It is this natural instinct which causes the lamb to follow its mother and avoid the wolf.

[7] Thomas V. Flynn, O. P., "The Cogitative Power," *The Thomist*, XVI (1953), p. 342.

[8] In I Met., 1.

Above this degree of knowledge in brutes, man, however, possesses experience properly so called, by means of which he knows the useful or the harmful in his environment through comparison of instances received in memory. "This kind of comparison is proper to man, and pertains to the cogitative power, which is called particular reason, because it compares individual intentions, as the universal reason, universal ones." [9] Experience in man and the brute will be ordained to the same end: the suitability of objects relative to the well-being of the organism. There is a difference, however, in the apprehension of suitability. Animals perceive their intentions by natural instinct, man perceives them by a comparative process. Hence the natural estimative sense of animals is replaced in man by the cogitative power.

Experience in Animals

In animal experience, St. Thomas observes there is a capacity for apprehending certain data which are not immediately and as such given by the external senses.[10] The usual example to which St. Thomas repeatedly refers is the one of the sheep being aware of the peril of the wolf. What the sheep senses is merely a shape, a size, a color, a smell, the sound of a howl. Danger does not appear in these features, nor is the awareness of favorable or unfavorable environmental factors acquired by experience; for even the young animal behaves in a suitable manner. Since there is no rational capacity in animals, they cannot conclude in any way from the sense-data that what they apprehend is indicative of danger. One has, therefore, to assume that the brutes are gifted with a particular faculty enabling them to become cognizant of favorable and unfavorable environmental situations. This faculty is given the name of estimative power.

The faculty of brute experience, therefore, is the estimative

[9] *Ibid.* The term "intention" is equivocal in signification. Its most reasonable meaning seems to be that of "cognition" or "object known." Cf. George P. Klubertanz, S. J., *The Discursive Power*, (St. Louis, 1952), pp. 231-232.

[10] I, Q. 78, a. 4.

power. Its object is the material singular thing insofar as it is beneficial or harmful to the animal. Since the suitability of an object for the organism is not sensed *per se* by any exterior sense, it is called an insensate intention and is said to be sensed incidentally or *per accidens*.[11] The sensible *per accidens* as a specifying object of animal experience is constituted by the following conditions: 1) it must be accidentally sensed by an exterior sense; 2) it must at the same time be cognized *per se* by the estimative power; 3) it must be cognized in this latter way immediately, unhesitatingly, and without discourse; and 4) it must be cognized in the particular, not in the universal. This last specification is necessary, since only the intellect can know the sensible *per accidens* in the universal.[12] This object of animal experience proceeding from the estimative power is an insensate intention under a universal aspect. As St. Thomas points out: "The sensitive powers, both of apprehension and of appetite, can tend to something universally. Thus we say the object of sight is color considered generically. . . . Accordingly hatred in the sensitive faculty can regard something universally because this thing, by reason of its common nature, and not merely as an individual, is hostile to the animal—for instance . . . a sheep hates the wolf universally."[13] Moreover, it is the insensate intention, or sensible *per accidens* in the particular as present which is the object of experience. In this way, brute experience, as the act of the estimative power, is distinguished from sense memory which is the storehouse of sensorial and factual experiences and of intentions apprehended through the estimative power.[14] This attainment of the sensible *per accidens* by the animal results from the fact that the particular thing is the principle or term of some action or passion. It is ordered to the biological utility of the animal. "Thus a sheep knows this particular lamb, not as this lamb, but simply as something to be suckled; and it knows this grass just insofar as this grass is its food."[15]

[11] In II De Anima, 6.
[12] *Ibid.*; also cf. Flynn, *op. cit.*, p. 546.
[13] I-II, Q. 29, a. 6.
[14] I, Q. 78, a. 4.
[15] In II De Anima, 6.

Animal experience, like all practical knowledge, concerns the end and the means to the end. In the brute, however, there is an unvarying end and equally unvarying means to that end. As St. Thomas points out: "Sense is found in all animals, but animals other than man have no intellect: which is proved by this, that they do not work, like intellectual agents, in diverse and opposite ways, but just as nature moves them to fixed and uniform specific activities, as every swallow builds its nest in the same way." [16] And again: "Even in dumb animals there are fixed ways of obtaining an end, wherefore we observe that all the animals of a same species act in like manner." [17] Hence it is that although animal activities sometimes manifest a knowledge that simulates conceptual knowledge and induces some psychologists fallaciously to attribute intellectual powers to animals, nevertheless, animals do not determine their own ends, nor do they think out the means to attain those ends. Moreover, the brute's natural estimation about the usefulness or harmfulness of some concrete singular object can be considered a judgment only in an improper sense. To predicate true judgment of any animal activity would be to fall victim to humanizing the brute. For that reason St. Thomas observes: "The name 'judgment' according to its original imposition means 'the correct determination of what is just.' It has been extended to signify 'a correct determination' in any manner, as well speculative as practical." [18] It is in this broad sense that judgment is used in regard to the natural estimation of animals. "Some things act with judgment, but not a free one, as the brute animals, for the sheep, seeing the wolf, judges it ought to be avoided with a natural judgment, and not a free one, because it judges this, not from a comparison, but from natural instinct." [19]

All this indicates that the quasi-experience of animals is naturally determined. This determination is ultimately based

[16] II Cont. Gent., 66.
[17] II-II, Q. 47, a. 15, ad 3.
[18] II-II, Q. 60, a. 1, ad 1.
[19] I, Q. 83, a. 1.

on the necessary natural determination of the sensitive powers.[20] Animal experience, as the product of animal instinct, is based on the fact that there is in the animal a power, the estimative, which by its very structure apprehends some objects as suitable or not, and thus moves the animal to pursue or to flee.[21] Animals, then, are entirely dependent upon instinctive reactions for adjustment to the environment. Reaction with them is purely instinctive, the same stimulus or combination of stimuli uniformly giving rise to the same adjustment. Lacking plasticity and flexibility in choosing ends and means to ends, they are incapable of being truly educated. It is true that they can provide for the future and thus seem to possess an appearance of prudence, but they are directed to fixed ends through fixed means. In such cognition, God supplies the judgment necessary for action. "As light and heavy objects are not the cause of their own movement, so also neither do brutes judge things by their own judgment but follow the judgment given them by God." [22]

The reason for a quasi-experience and a quasi-prudence in animals high in the zoological scale is found in the fact that: "The divine Wisdom joins the ends of the first things with the beginnings of the second, because every inferior nature in its highest element touches the lowest element of the superior nature, according as it participates something of the superior nature, although deficiently: therefore in apprehension as well as in sensitive appetite there is to be found something in which the sensitive part touches reason." [23] It is not surprising, then, that some of the activities of the higher animals exhibit a startling resemblance to the intellectual functions of man.

Animal experience at best, however, has only biological value. Although there may be certain animal cognitions which are not immediately practical, nevertheless, in the last analysis all animal experience is concerned with self-preservation, sex and

[20] I, q. 82, a. 2, ad 3.
[21] I-II, Q. 17, a. 2, ad 3.
[22] I-II, Q. 13, a. 2, ad 3; De Ver., Q. 24, a. 1.
[23] In II Sent., d. 24, Q. 2, a. 1; II Cont. Gent., 91; De Ver., Q. 25, a. 2.

food. " For the usefulness of sensible things is gauged by their relation to the preservation of the animal's nature . . . for dogs do not take delight in the smell of hares, but in eating them; . . . nor does the lion feel pleasure at the lowing of the ox, but in devouring it." [24] Thus St. Thomas points out that the ultimate direction of animal sensibility is purely practical; knowledge is never an end in itself. " Sensitive cognition has two ends. In one way, as well in men as in other animals, its purpose is the sustaining of the body, because by such a knowledge, men and other animals avoid harmful things, and seek those which are necessary for the sustaining of the body. In a second way, in man it is especially directed to intellectual knowledge, both speculative and practical." [25]

Experience in Man

Experience in man is unique because man is unique in his being and operation. He rules himself through reason. According to the Dionysian principle of hierarchy that the highest power of the lower order is close to, and similar to, the lowest power of the higher, experience in man will take on some of the characteristics of reason.[26] Just as the estimative power of brutes is somewhat similar to reason, inasmuch as brutes have a certain natural prudence,[27] so also the cogitative power, the highest faculty of sense experience in man, will participate somewhat in the activity of reason. As St. Thomas points out:

> That power, which is called " cogitative " by the philosophers, is on the boundary of the sensitive and intellective parts, where the sensitive part touches the intellective. For it has something from the sensitive part, namely that it considers particular forms; and it has something from the intellective, namely that it compares; and so it is in men alone. And because the sensitive part is better known than the intellective, for this reason, just as the determination of the intellective part is denominated from the sense, as was said, so every comparison of the intellect is named from *cogitatio*.[28]

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[24] I-II, Q. 31, a. 6.
[25] II-II, Q. 167, a. 2.
[26] De Ver., Q. 25, a. 2; I, Q. 76, a. 5.
[27] De Ver., Q. 15, a. 1.
[28] In III Sent., d. 26, Q. 2, a. 2.

Thus human experience, proceeding from the cogitative power, is an operation existing at the point of juncture between sense operations and intellectual operation. It is concerned with the particular, and so is a sense activity, but it does this by comparison, which is from the intellect. Human experience, therefore, is an operation in which reason is concerned. Whenever St. Thomas speaks of experience he will always relate it to the cogitative power, which is called particular reason: for it discourses about particulars as universals.[29] Quasi-experience of animals is related to the estimative power. For that reason, when St. Thomas speaks of sensibility as such, or of the infant who has not reached the use of reason, he will not speak of the cogitative power, because then the intellect is absent by definition, or is not operative by virtue of the concrete case. " Other animals do not seek the suitable and avoid the harmful by the deliberation of reason, but by the natural instinct of the estimative power, and such natural instinct is also in children; and so they take the breast, and take other suitable things, without anyone teaching them." Although estimative experience is found in animals and in men devoid of the use of reason, nevertheless, collative experience is found only in men.

The distinctiveness of human experience is found in the fact that the faculty of experience, the cogitative power, is never unrelated to, but rather participates in some fashion in the operation of reason. In man, sense is not for its own sake, but also, and even primarily, for the sake of the intellect. " Senses are given to man not merely to procure the necessities of life, as is the case with other animals, but also in order to know." [31] Hence, human experience has not only a biological utility, but also intellectual utility. The reason for this perfection in the sensitive faculties of man is found in the fact that the soul is a functional whole, spreading its influence through the intellectual, sensitive and vegetative potencies.[32] " The senses, moreover, are a certain imperfect participation of the intelligence;

[29] I, Q. 78, a. 4.
[30] In II Sent., d. 20, Q. 2, a. 5.
[31] I, Q. 91, a. 3, ad 3.
[32] I, Q. 77, a. 4.

wherefore, according to their natural origin, they proceed from intelligence as the imperfect from the perfect. But considered as receptive principles . . . the more imperfect powers precede the others in the order of generation, for the animal is generated before the man." [33]

Just as in the brute animals all the sensitive faculties are concentrated and specified subjectively by the order they must have in operating according to their own estimative power, so also the sensitive faculties in man receive the influence of the intellect which they must naturally serve. By reason of this influence, the sense nature of man functions as if impregnated with rationality and is not held to its own level. " The sensible soul is more noble in man than in the other animals, because in man it not only is sensible, but also rational." [34] Hence it is that human experience can obtain results intrinsically superior in value to the quasi-experience of brutes, since it touches the region proper to intelligence. Experience without intelligence is second-rate knowledge at best. By directing, modifying and extending the activity of the senses, the intellect fertilizes experience with its vitalizing power, enriching it far beyond the capacity of the inferior sense powers.

This does not imply in any way that human experience is essentially rational or that it partakes of the immateriality of the intellectual activity. Indeed, because the faculty of experience, the cogitative power, is specified by its object, the material singular; and " such so-called intellect is the act of a corporeal organ," it follows that experience itself is necessarily of a sensitive nature.[35] St. Thomas goes so far as to localize the cogitative power in the middle part of the head.[36] He was merely expressing, however, the opinion current in his time. As this organ is dependent for its well-being upon the vegetative potencies, it is clear that weak health will affect this faculty as well as the other sensitive faculties, and through them, the intellect

[33] I, Q. 77, a. 4.
[34] De Anima, a. 11 and 12.
[35] I, Q. 79, a. 2, ad 2.
[36] I, Q. 78, a. 4.

itself. Good health is the physiological condition for both good experience and good intellection.

Unlike the animal which apprehends the individual only in so far as it is the principle or term of some action or passion, the cogitative power in man apprehends the individual as standing under a common nature; " and this because it is united to intellect in one and the same subject." [37] Thus a sheep knows this particular lamb, not as this lamb, but simply as something to be suckled; and it knows this grass just in so far as this grass is its food. Man, on the other hand is aware of a man as this man, and this tree as this tree. Animal experience, therefore, is very limited in scope, extending only to those individual things which are biologically useful to the animal organism. The entire collection of singulars in many species will not fall under animal experience, since the brute's practical operations are limited. As St. Thomas observes: " Other individuals which have no relation to its (the animal's) own actions or passions it does not apprehend at all by natural instinct. For the purpose of natural instincts in animals is to direct them in their actions and passions, so as to seek and avoid things according to the requirements of their nature." [38] Human experience goes further than this, for its object is not only knowledge of the individual as useful for man's animal part, but also as it is useful for his distinctively human part, his intellect.

The process by which man, after he has attained the use of reason, makes his sensory judgments concerning sensory goods is that of comparison. It is a kind of sensory discourse. This discourse follows the movement of the intellect in its inductive and demonstrative processes. In the first process, the cogitative power's comparison terminates in a singular judgment called an experience. This singular judgment is called by Cajetan a quasi-confused universal. " It is so called because the actual universal of the intellect is contained in the quasi-universal potentially. Cajetan notes that this judgment is the result of many and many a collation, in the course of which phantasms

[37] In II De Anima, 13. [38] *Ibid.*

obviously having nothing essential to do with the object in question are discarded." [39] Upon the whole sense order devolves the task of dematerializing the potential universal for abstraction by the intellect; but those senses which are closest to intellect will play the most important role in this process. Hence the cogitative power's collative activity terminating in the experiential judgment will be the culmination of all sensory activity and will be the last act of the sense order preparatory to intellectual abstraction. Indeed, experience has been called the secondary, complete synthesis of the sense order because it is perception in its fullest and most perfect realization. "For the cognizant sense unifies the combined data of common sense, the imagination, and the memory, relating the object of sensation to its situation as a whole, as in the first instances, and to other experiences." [40]

It would seem, therefore, that the convergence of all sensitive cognitions is found in the phenomenon known as human experience. Thus its task in following the inductive process of the intellect will be, not only to apprehend what in the singular sensible is good or harmful, pleasant or unpleasant to man, but also to dispose the entire sensible order to the good of the intellect. From it will be derived man's first intellectual conceptions and the first principles of the intellect. It is by reason of this ascent from experience to intelligence that the mind is able to know singular things: for the object of the mind is the universal and it is only by reflexion on the process from sense to intellect that man knows the singular." [41]

Moreover, experience follows the movement of the intellect in its demonstrative process, that is, when the intellect is reducing its conclusions to first principles. Inasmuch as the first principles come to the mind for the first time from the senses, and the senses are in contact with external things, then in the Thomistic scheme, the objectivity of knowledge is preserved in

[39] Flynn, *op. cit.*, p. 560.

[40] George P. Klubertanz, S.J., "The Internal Senses in the Process of Cognition," *The Modern Schoolman*, XVIII (1940-1941), p. 30.

[41] De Ver., Q. 10, a. 5.

its entirety—arising from experience and ending in experience. Finally, it allows the man, reasoning deductively, to apply his universal knowledge about things to be done to the particular instance, which particular instance is known only through experience.[42] In this we find the value attribute of experience, of which we shall speak. These functions of experience make it indispensable both for life and for learning. Since experience in man resembles in many ways the operations of the intellect, it will be profitable to compare them.

Experience and Intellect

Experience, as the act of the cogitative power, may be compared to the cogitative power as intelligence is to the intellect. Intelligence is distinct from the intellect as any act is distinct from the faculty producing it. Thus St. Thomas points out: "The word 'intelligence' properly signifies the intellect's very act, which is to understand . . . thus intelligence is not distinct from the intellect as power from power; but as act from power."[43] Similarly, experience is distinct from the cogitative power as an act is distinct from its power.

Now the mind as engaged in a process of discursive reasoning about universal intentions is called intellective reason (*ratio*), in distinction to the mind as the faculty of universal principles, which is known as *intellectus* or understanding.[44] In a similar fashion, the cogitative power, as engaged in a kind of discursive reasoning about particulars, is called particular reason in distinction to the cogitative power using singulars as principles, which is known as passive intellect.[45] The process of intellective reason discoursing about universal intentions is called thinking or cogitation; so also the cogitative power in discoursing about particular intentions is a quasi-kind of thinking. Indeed, the mental inquiry of the intellect is denominated as thinking (*cogitatio*) by reason of its similarity to the *collatio* of the

[42] *Ibid.*; also cf. II-II, Q. 42, a. 3, ad 3.
[43] I, Q. 79, a. 10.
[44] I, Q. 78, a. 4.
[45] In VI Eth. 9.

cogitative power rather than *vice versa*.[46] Every process has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning of intelligence is from first principles (*intellectus*); its medium is the discourse of reason about universals (*ratio*): its term is the judgment of reason producing intellectual knowledge (*scientia*). In like manner, the beginning of experience is from singulars retained in memory. They are the principles of experience. The medium of experience is the comparison of memories (*collatio*); its term is the judgment of experience producing integrated sensitive knowledge. The cognitional value of the conclusions of science is certitude; of experience, suspicion. Suspicion is that species of conjecture which deals with singulars.[47]

Anything is said to be perfect in so far as it attains its end.[48] Thus science is the perfection of intellect; experience, the perfection of sense. Anything is denominated according to that which is perfect in it. Hence, man is called a reasoning animal and not an experiencing animal. Moreover, as the perfect virtually contains the imperfect, as the composite contains the simple, as science contains the principles from which it is generated, so also experience, being the ultimate act in the order of sense, virtually contains all those acts of the sensitive order which are below it.[49] The word experience, therefore, can be extended to include all those acts which go to make up the phenomenon known as experience. It is in this general sense that the word experience is most often used.

St. Thomas remarks that " what is of a superior nature cannot exist in an inferior nature perfectly, but only through a kind of weak participation." [50] Experience and intelligence, therefore, while exhibiting a marvelous similarity, are, nevertheless, very much different. No matter how high sensitive knowledge ascends, it is still sense. It has to do with the particular and the contingent. Experience, as experience, never rises above the level. The intellect on the other hand, deals

[46] De Ver., Q. 14, a. 1, ad 9: II-II, Q. 2, a. 1.
[47] In VI Eth. 3.
[48] In V Met. 18.
[49] De Ver., Q. 15, a. 1, ad 5.
[50] *Ibid.*, Q. 15, a. 1.

with the universal and necessary. Between sense and intellect, between the universal and particular, there intervenes a tremendous gap. This gap, however, is somewhat filled by experience. As man stands as a link between animals and angels, participating in some way in the nature of both, so also experience stands midway between pure sense knowledge and intellection.

That in itself poses a difficult problem. We are men, not animals. Although we can logically separate the workings of sense and intellect, in reality they are one, for in man there is unity of operation and being. Human activity, proceeding from man, while being unified, exhibits a great diversity and variety. In order to gain knowledge of its nature it must be analyzed. At the same time, the unity of operation must not be lost sight of. Yet in the atomistic breakdown of the unity of human operation, there is the danger, indeed, there is the tendency to treat each aspect of man's activity as a separate and isolated phenomenon. Intellectual knowledge itself, while displaying a marvelous unity, at the same time presupposes the cooperation of the external and internal senses, intertwined in reciprocal influence, hierarchically ordered to one another, dynamically related in the process of cognition. To logically precise from this dynamic order in order to discover its constituent parts is to run the risk of compartmentalizing man's activity and of failing to see the whole in proper perspective because one has become enmeshed in the parts. This must be kept in mind in any study of experience; for experience, while being a complex phenomenon and the foundation of all intellectual constructions, is itself but one part of the total learning process.

Perhaps, if we were to understand properly the process of experience on a purely sensitive level, we would have to study it in children before the child began to operate on an intellectual plane. Even then it would be hardly possible to give an intelligible account of it.[51] Human experience, as we know it, is

[51] Klubertanz, *The Discursive Power*, p. 237.

permeated with the influence of the intellect and it is difficult to say exactly when this influence is absent. It is inevitable, then, that our knowledge of experience will be analogical. We examine it to find out how it is similar to, yet different from intelligence; at the same time we show how it is different from, yet very similar to the sense knowledge of animals.

The Subject of Experience

Experience, as defined by St. Thomas, is something distinctively human. It is predicated of animals in an analogous fashion insofar as they possess it in a rather feeble manner. "Because from many sensations and memory animals become accustomed to seek or avoid something, hence it is that they seem to share something of experience, even though but little." [52] Angels and demons are also said to possess experience, but that too only analogously. "Experience can be attributed to the angels (and demons) according to the likeness of the things known, although not by a likeness of knowing power. We have experience when we know single objects through the senses; the angels likewise know single objects . . . yet not through the senses." [53] Both angels and animals lack experience properly so-called because they lack the essential element of experience; they do not discourse about singulars as man does.[54] In the animal this is because of the deficiency and weakness of animal nature; in the angel it is because of the perfection of angelic nature and operation.

What is a perfection in man in comparison to animal nature is an imperfection when considered relative to angelic and divine activity. Man by his various powers of knowledge knows all classes of things, apprehending universals and immaterial things by his intellect, and things singular and corporeal by the senses. The angel, however, knows both by his one mental power, "for the order of things run in this way, that the higher a thing is, so much the more is its power unified and far-reaching." [55]

[52] In I Met., 1.
[53] I, Q. 54, a. 5.
[54] I, Q. 58, a. 3 ad 3.
[55] I, Q. 57, a. 2.

Hence it is that: " through the species imparted to them do the angels know things, not only as to their universal nature, but likewise in their individual conditions, in so far as they are manifold representations of that one simple essence." [56]

As we have noted previously, the proximate subject from which experience emanates is the cogitative power. St. Thomas, however, extends the meaning of experience to include the intuitive knowledge of the intellect in apprehending its own acts.[57] Hence it is that the intellect in its operation knows itself experientially by its own acts, as do other powers of the soul. To quote St. Thomas: " These things which are in the soul by their physical reality, are known through experimental knowledge; insofar as through acts man has experience of their inward principles: thus when we wish, we perceive we have a will; and when we exercise the functions of life, we observe there is life in us." [58] Thus the spirituality of intelligence and its specific distinctness from the operations of sense, or again the specific difference between the will and the sensitive appetite, are known experientially. This experiential knowledge of the intellect, however, is not clear and evident and is to be distinguished from a second kind of knowledge which derives from an accurate introspection of our thought processes and which is brought about by the reflexive power of the intellect.

That is why St. Thomas takes great care in explaining how the soul knows itself by its own act.

> There is a difference, however, between these two kinds of knowledge, and it consists in this, that the mere presence of the mind suffices for the first; The mind itself being the principle of action whereby it perceives itself, and hence it is said to know itself by its own presence. But as regards the second kind of knowledge, the mere presence of the mind does not suffice, and there is further required a careful and subtle inquiry.[59]

This explains why men, having experimental knowledge of the soul's activity, have, nevertheless, erred in their investiga-

[56] *Ibid.*
[57] I, Q. 79, a. 4.
[58] I-II, Q. 112, a. 5, ad 1.
[59] I, Q. 87, a. 1.

tion of its true nature. The intellect's reflexive investigation of its own activity constitutes the art of introspection.

Introspection is distinct from observation and experimentation. Observation consists in the examination and collection of facts and phenomena, with or without the help of instruments, and without changing the natural condition of the observed phenomena. Experimentation consists, on the other hand, not only in the examination of things, but also in the subjection of one thing to another, the mixture and manipulation of phenomena, in order that new and unfamiliar effects may be produced by work of art.[60] Such experience of experimentation is usually attributed to the physical sciences, but the essence of the process, consisting in the comparison of individual things, is equally verified in the common experience of all men. In any event, the predication of experience to any kind of intellectual activity is accomplished only by extending the meaning of the term; for in the Thomistic scheme, experience properly so-called belongs to the order of sense, and only to the order of sense.

The Scope of Experience

All persons, possessing the same human nature, coming into contact with the same world of objects, are subject to the process of experience. In one way, experience is unique to the experiencing individual. All men do not have the same experiences. But, in another sense, since all men possess the same specific powers and operations and since all experience takes its rise from and converges at the same objects in the physical environment, then, we can speak of public experience as well as private experience, of shared experience as well as individual experience.

Shared experience is common experience—using the phrase " common experience " to " denote the whole set of experiences which men have naturally through the ordinary operation of

[60] Sanseverino Cajetano, *Philosophia Christiana*, (Naples, 1878), IV, p. 174.

their senses, their memories and imaginations." [61] Although the experience of two men are never identical under all aspects, nevertheless, experience is common to both to the extent that they share experiences which have thus arisen naturally in the course of their lives. Indeed, strange as it may seen, the common experience of men and even the crude experience of the child is not too far removed from the refined experience of the scientist. It is true that the experience of the child is a natural process carried on by the ordinary operation of the senses in daily life. The scientist, on the other hand, under controlled conditions, is said to make an experience or experiment. Usually by the use of instruments which enlarge and extend the power of the senses, he contrives an artificial situation which discloses to his senses things he could never derive from ordinary experience. His experience is deliberative investigation under controlled conditions; the child's experience is often non-deliberative, or if deliberative, devoid of technical apparatus and arising in daily life under non-controlled conditions. The former is special, refined and artificial experience; the latter is common, crude and natural experience. The work of the scientist in his laboratory is undoubtedly different from the gropings and searchings of the infant, yet, fundamentally, they are both doing the same thing. Both are probing, trying, testing, in order to obtain knowledge of objects in the world about them; and this is the essence of experience.

Man can profit, not only by his own experience, but also by the experience of other men. This includes the experience of those men living with him in the present and the experience of all men who have preceded him. In this sense, we can speak of funded or race experience. It embraces all the accomplishments of mankind in the arts, literature and sciences, preserved and handed down through the ages, and known as the culture, social heritage or civilization of mankind.

Relative to the individual, experience, as the foundation of and the propaedeutic to science, comprises all those things by

[61] Mortimer J. Adler, *What Man Has Made of Man,* (New York, 1937), p. 130.

means of which the intellect through induction can formulate the principles of the various sciences.[62] A diversity of experience is necessarily demanded according to the diversity of the various sciences. Thus it will comprehend in its scope both the facts or phenomena which the individual observes, explores or meets with in his daily life and those things which are transmitted to him by word of mouth or which he derives from books. Opinions current in the society in which he lives, historical facts and theories, conclusions based on faith and accepted upon the authority of his teachers, custom, literature and the like—all go to form the warp and woof of his personal experience.

Since it is a practical impossibility for man to come in contact with all aspects of reality or his environment, much of his experience will be vicarious. For well or ill, the individual's experience will influence his practical activity, form the starting point in sense of his later intellectual constructions and permeate his whole life. In most cases, many sensations and many memories of the same thing are required to form an experience sufficiently elaborated so that the intellect may abstract a universal concept. This is known as formal experience. In other cases, virtual experience suffices. This type of experience may be derived simply from one sensation or one memory, which in itself may be equivalent to many memories.[63] Thus universals of mathematics presuppose virtual experience, but universals of natural philosophy presuppose formal experience. Whatever the case, experience will constitute the indispensable basis of all life and learning.

The Value Attribute of Experience

Experience, as the act of the cogitative power, is concerned with the particular thing under the aspect of being suitable or non-suitable to man. The object of intelligence is the universal;

[62] In I Eth. 11.

[63] J. Hoenen, "De Origine Primorum Principiorum Scientiae," *Gregoriamum*, XIV (1933), p. 163.

the object of experience is the particular. If the singular sensible were not the object of experience, a person would never arrive at the knowledge of this man and this lion and the like, but would know only man or lion according to their universal conception. Moreover, if in experience, man did not make judgments concerning the suitability of particular things, he would never act. We never do anything unless we desire something or wish to avoid something. At the same time, we never desire or avoid anything unless we judge it to be good or bad for ourselves. Hence certain judgments always precede our actions; and these judgments are singular since our actions are always concerned with singular things. It follows, therefore, that the object of experience is the particular thing as good or bad for man; for the proper object of intelligence is the universal.

Herein lies the value attribute of experience. Nor is this perception of value in the particular thing confined only to notions of convenience, usefulness, and suchlike, for there are many values which do not belong to these aforementioned classes. As Rudolph Allers points out:

> The rational will can not consider (sic) any particular object without some intermediary function which forms, as it were, the connecting link between the immaterial faculty, and the material particular in which the values, as realized and desirable or as to be realized by man's action, reside. Now there are many values which do not belong to the classes of usefulness, convenience, damage or danger. These values too must be brought close to the will by some intermediary, which naturally can not be any other than the *vis cogitativa*. . . . It seems, therefore, correct to define the proper object, in this regard, of the *vis cogitativa* as any value whatsoever, in so far as it is realized in a particular thing or situation and apprehended as such.[64]

Since acts are specified by their objects and experience is the act of the cogitative power, then the proper object of experience is any value apprehended in the particular.

This experienced value attribute is a pervasive and insepar-

[64] Rudolph Allers, "The Vis Cogitativa and Evaluation," *The New Scholasticism*. XV (1931), pp. 200-201.

able aspect of every experience. All human wants, urges, desires, and aspirations are permeated with some value attribute. For instance, a value attribute of a relatively low order is experienced in situations where physical needs are satisfied in a crude and elemental way; whereas a higher, richer, subtler, more satisfying value attribute is experienced in concrete situations where man's higher faculties are exercised and his higher aspiration fulfilled. A job well done, helping a friend, the solution of a highly abstract problem, the performance of a virtuous deed and the like, all these activities of life contain value attributes. Indeed, all the humble ordinary activities of life contain an element of value: learning to read and write, mowing the lawn, completing a crossword puzzle, liking and disliking, joy and sorrow, disappointment and disturbance, these are the value attributes of everything we do.

Since human experience is open to, and most often is under the guidance of reason, its object extends to the whole field of concrete suitability and man is able to perceive a value content in every particular situation. This provides a plausible explanation for the many divergent types of activity men seek to repeat. Man tries to recapture qualities he has experienced on previous occasions—in satisfying his physical, intellectual, social and cultural needs. He wants to recapture these experiences simply because he enjoys the value attributes related to them. The sensed value of any experience is crucially important, for it is the catalyzer needed to produce all our actions.

Considered in itself, on a purely sensory level in abstraction from the rest of man, human experience would be very imperfect. But when we consider it as in contact with and united to reason we come to a very different result. Under the guiding influence of reason it penetrates into all the innumerable fields of human activity.[65] In this way man can increase the range of his experience and attain an enhancement of the value attribute of experience. It is the capacity man has to sense added value in his experience that accounts for his ceaseless

[65] De Virt. in Comm., Q. 1, a. 6.

striving, for his characteristic unwillingness to have things remain as they are. It explains, moreover, the anticipatory quality of man's experience and points out the inadequacy of trying to account for it solely in terms of influences operating in the present.

Every experience of the present involves the future as well as the past. Our experience in any immediate situation is related so indissolubly to our expectancies that one could hardly exist without the other. The present and past act as a take-off for the things expected or hoped for in the future. That is why St. Thomas points out that experience is the cause of hope. Hope is concerned with a future good, difficult but possible to obtain.

> Consequently, a thing may be the cause of hope, either because it makes something possible to a man: or because it makes him think something possible. In the first way hope is caused by everything which increases a man's power, e. g., riches, strength, and among others, experience: since by experience man acquires the faculty of doing something easily, and the result of this is hope. Wherefore Vegetius says: No one fears to do that which he is sure of having learned well. In the second way, hope is caused by everything which makes man think that he can obtain something: and then again experience is the cause of hope, in so far as it makes him reckon something possible which before his experience he looked upon as impossible.[66]

Experience of many failures is also the reason why old people sometimes lack confidence or hope of success; while the young because of their very lack of experience in suffering failure or defeat sometimes abound in self-confidence and hope.[67] This indicates the necessity of giving children tasks which can be accomplished within the framework of their capabilities. The experience of the value attributes of success and achievement in a task well done will help develop the self-confidence necessary for hope of future achievement.

It is the nature of man to strive for an increase in the quality of experience so long as there is some hope of success, even

[66] I-II, Q. 40, a. 5.

[67] I-II, Q. 40, a. 6, ad 2.

though he may know full well it will involve sacrifice and pain. And the reason that he does this is because he has an intellectual appreciation of those values which are good in themselves and also good for himself. An increment of the value of any experience is possible only if there is some standard, some form to use as a springboard for emergence. We cannot sense an enhancement of quality in experience if we have no standard as a takeoff.

Abstractions permit men to check a present experience against the past and potential future, against universal rules, commandments, laws. The practical principles of reason itself deal with the universal.[68] These universal objects are outside the field of operation; they are abstracted from space and time, immobile in themselves. "Honor thy father and thy mother," says universal reason. This proposition is universal and necessary, and as such it cannot immediately lead to action which is always in the realm of the particular.[69] Yet a transition must be made, if reason is be to the guide of human action. Experience stands ready at hand. Its field is precisely the concrete particular as it is good for men. Seeing the particular good in the apprehension of the cogitative power, reason can relate it to its own universal apprehensions.[70] It can then draw the conclusion: "This good thing is to be done." Thus reason provides the standard by which the concrete value can be realized in the myriad instances of experience. Experience, then is both permeated with the intelligibility of reason, and limited by the particularity of sense.

A characteristic of human activity is the fact of purpose. Human behavior is never random or chaotic. "*Omne agens agit propter finem*," [71] say the Scholastics, and human activity is inevitably bound up with the realization of some value. An appreciation of value considered universally belongs to the intellect; a judgment of particular value is made by the cogitative power. As St. Thomas points out: "The intellect or reason

[68] II-II, Q. 47, a. 1.
[69] II-II, Q. 47, a. 3.
[70] De Ver., Q. 10, a. 5.
[71] I-II, Q. 1, a. 2.

knows in the universal the end towards which it ordains the act of the concupiscible and irascible appetites, by commanding them. This universal knowledge it applies to the singular by means of the cogitative power." [72] The judgment of experience, therefore, is about the value component of every experience.

In the process of living, man is constantly bombarded by a flow of sensations from which he derives all his experiences. These impressions received by man from his senses are meaningless unless they become functionally related to his purposes. The very fact that man sifts and sorts, accepts and rejects images of past sensations is dependent upon the fact that the cogitative power recognizes them as contributing in some way to human welfare. Thus it is that attention in man becomes a problem of relating particular goods found by experience to the welfare of the individual. As Klubertanz asserts: "Attention, therefore, in the sensory order is a function of sense appetite, which is determined by the judgment of the estimative or discursive power in its judgments." [73]

The fact that the fleeting images of sense would stop, come to rest, as it were, merge and coalesce with kindred images, be integrated about a core, can be explained only by the recognition that they serve the purposes of the individual who apprehends some value in them. As the thing that is loved tends to remain within the apprehension of the lover, so also the particular sensible remains in the experience of the individual because it has value for him. The significance anything in our environment has for us originates in some personal experience. The meaning we relate to any sense impression is derived only through past experience as we have tried to carry out our purpose. This has important implications for methodology in learning and teaching, for there is no starting or progress in learning unless we start from the experience of the individual. Moreover, as the intellect and will influence each other reciprocally, so also do the cogitative power and the sensitive appetite.

[72] De Ver., Q. 10, a. 5, ad 4.
[73] Klubertanz, *The Discursive Power*, p. 290.

In practical knowledge, universal principles are applied to contingent operables by the cogitative power's apprehension of the universal value concreted in the particular instance. This function derives naturally from the proper act of the cogitative power inasmuch as its object is the concrete sensible good. It is different with those objects which are not operable or practical, which deal, not with doing, but with knowing. In other words, how is the particular thing which is an object of speculative knowledge grasped through experience by the cogitative power, since in itself the object of speculative knowledge is not the good but the true? The plausible answer seems to be that the particular truth is also a particular good for man; for every truth is a certain good and every good is a certain truth.[74] Thus the interest of the individual in this particular thing to be known is bound up with the fact that it is good for him under some aspect; the aspect being the perfection of the knower. As Klubertanz shrewdly observes: ". . . interest is the key to all learning. But fundamentally there are two kinds of interest. There is interest which flows immediately from the object, because it is known to be sensibly good or useful. There is another form of interest, whose source is interior; it consists in this, that the knowledge of an object which as such is outside the field of value is looked on as the good and perfection of the knower." [75]

This accounts for the affective element in learning: the particular thing ordained to speculative knowledge is apprehended by the cogitative power as contributing to the welfare of the individual. The particular truth becomes a good—either because the cogitative power under the guidance of reason recognizes it as conducive to mental perfection, or because it is according to what we are accustomed to hear, or because it is proposed by a person whom we like, or it may be that it is accompanied by certain rewards or advantages. Whatever, the case, it has a distinct value attribute connected with it which

[74] I, Q. 82, a. 4, ad 1.
[75] Klubertanz, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

makes it desirable in this particular instance. In this we find the emotional overtones connected with all learning, for feelings of liking or disliking always accompany the study of any subject.

Because this is so, the teacher cannot disregard student attitudes. If the student develops a liking to learn while he is learning to learn, the interest in learning may continue lifelong.

Although many of the topics treated herein received no *ex professo* treatment by St. Thomas, nevertheless, we believe that they were treated in principle by the Angelic Doctor. His study of the cogitative power in man, as the faculty of experience, has laid the groundwork for the understanding of experience within the total context of human activity. His insistence upon experience as the foundation of knowledge and as the basis of all practical activity points up its great importance in the educative process and its extreme necessity for practical proficiency.

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MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND THE APOSTOLATE

I

"TWENTIETH Century Apostle,"[1] brief as it is, remains an enduring statement on the subject. In recounting the three ways in which the first Apostles worked their offensive strategy to bring happiness to unhappy men, Father Farrell put first the living of the message; second, the spoken word; and last, the written word. The supreme apostolic weapon of the original bearers of the Good News was in their very lives and actions:

> Short of the grace of God, it was their life-exposition of the message of Christ that made the western world Christian. The only limit set to the use of this instrument was dictated by the Master of life in setting a time for death. If their words portrayed temporal and eternal peace on a fascinating canvas, their lives and deeds put the same message in three dimensions, in a form that men could view and handle from all angles, a sculpture carved so harmoniously from the stubborn and diverse material of human lives as to leave no doubt of the divine genius of the Sculptor. Men read and doubted, they heard and argued, but when they saw they fell on their knees.[2]

The great point made in Father Farrell's essay—which happens to have been one of his last—is that the one apostolic instrument that has come down to us unimpaired is the glorious life-exposition of the message of Christ by the apostle. The way in which the important two instruments—the spoken and the written word—have not only been rendered more or less useless in our era but have bolstered the enemy's campaign also, is what concerns us here. For the modern apostle scanning the horizons of the fields outside the present cultivation of the

[1] Walter Farrell, O. P., "Twentieth Century Apostle," *The Thomist*, X (1947), 133-158.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

Church sees those fields, Father Farrell tells us truly, as much more humanly hopeless than in the days of the infant Church: " The audience of the modern apostle is almost totally lacking in the natural prerequisites for supernatural life. Sound notions of God and man are either already gone or moving rapidly to the last stages of decay." [3] Thus the apostolic weapons have become defensive rather than offensive; for the completeness of the corruption of natural truths has rendered the ordinary men and women of today invulnerable to the apostle's spoken or written message. Though the fundamental attacks on man's very nature have been left in obscurity, as the great Thomist pointed out, the denial of, or agnostic indifference to, man's spiritual essence is clear in the age's enthronement of relativism.

The demand of Father Farrell that we evaluate the spoken and written word from the standpoint of apostolic efficiency is a demand that they be used immediately to multiply the faithful apostle's own life-exposition in the lives of his hearers. Certainly, in our century, because of the hostile atmosphere toward truth, the improvement in our communication-means as such has only increased the fog of errors. The very art of printing, as Kierkegaard had observed in the past century, is a " satirical discovery " since it propagates falsehoods which might otherwise have died with the falsifiers. Not only has the notion of God been lost so completely that a proud world feels it can do without God and still base its pride on a caricature of man, as Father Farrell pointed out; there is also being fed to our people through press, radio, TV, a steady diet of distorted notions of human beings and their powers. Men have thus developed blind spots making it impossible for them to follow rational processes. There is a vast expenditure of wasted effort in trying to reason with them.

Nevertheless if the spoken and written word are to serve the Christian who uses these instruments as brands to set the faithful on fire—in the vivid imagery of Father Farrell—instead of showering their living sparks of truth on the modern fog to be

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

snuffed out by it, they are to be used according to the truths of the *philosophia perennis* with no compromising with current attitudes. Suppose that the Socratic doctrine of the soul as consciousness *has* been supplanted by the doctrine of the subconscious which denies man personal responsibility for his choices? Our revolt against reason which has inverted age-old philosophic values has not changed the fact that man is a reasonable and reasoning creature. The intimate interconnection of the life, the spoken word and the written word in the apostle's career does, of course, make his work in an era of enthroned relativism that of a spy in an enemy country; but if he is still to be *God's* spy he cannot teach that truth is subject to change even to get a foot in the door of the house of the soul at which he stands, and knocks. He must continue to challenge the leaders of our present " great war of ignorance."

II

The Yale physicist, Henry Margenau, speaks of the need for a new philosophy, though its details, he tells us, elude him.[4] But he is sure that " its method will reflect ongoing concerns, the dynamism of science itself." Dr. Margenau explained his " perspectives-of-science " philosophy in these terms:

> Like science this philosophy will conceive its goal to be an ideal one attainable only as a limiting answer to finite and often repeated human questions. Knowing the tentative nature of postulates, it will harbor no static certainties; while it will recognize meaningful eternal questions, it will brook no eternal answers, nor will it entertain timeless truths.

The *Key Reporter* article in which the above statement occurs had been based throughout on the PBK address which, as Visiting Lecturer for the year 1957-58, the Yale professor gave before Phi Beta Kappa audiences throughout America. This

[4] H. Margenau, " The Task of the Coming Philosophy," *The Key Reporter*, Autumn, 1959, pp. 2-3 ff.

speech was enthusiastically received at Ohio University by members of the learned Society and the faculty generally.

Such dogmatism as Margenau's, replacing metaphysics with naturalism, is as unhappy as it is inevitable in our current cultural climate. Sense knowledge, on which science rests, is always relative, of necessity, but sense knowledge is not man's only source of knowledge. If it were so, there would be only what is past, or passing, or to come, as Yeats sings, ending his "Sailing to Byzantium." And in that flowing stream what aims or goals for man are possible, even of formulation, let alone realization? For man so far from being able to step twice into the river of Heraclitus cannot, as it was long ago recognized, step into it even once.

In whatever formulation the new philosophy occurs it is always reducible to the pre-Socratic Heraclitean flux; for in the last analysis nature's ever-living bonfire is the proposed thought-system of the modern relativist, and it is also the picture mirrored in all our current art forms of every genre. We have its defenders in those who deny free will as intrinsic necessity but insist paradoxically on freedom from any external authority; we have them in our upholders of the idea of a cosmic order without intelligent direction and in those who seek explanation of conduct in biological drives and subconscious influences. And we have its defenders in theologians.

Reinhold Niebuhr, on the basis of the flux of the temporal world, has made a radical distinction between nature and history. In the latter God is said to intervene from time to time "to reconstruct the rational concepts of meaning which men and cultures construct under the false assumption that they have a mind which completely transcends the flux of history, when actually it can only construct a realm of meaning from a particular standpoint within the flux."[1] (Saint Thomas, Niebuhr has been saying over and over for years, simply did not appreciate the finiteness of man's reason and its involvement in the flux of the temporal world!)

[1] R. Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Scribner, 1953), p. 200.

The Niebuhr flux-philosophy is echoed in the demand of certain Catholic theologians who believe, as Father John L. McKenzie wrote recently,[6] that our new intellectual climate needs a new philosophic language. In this article the Jesuit scholar observed that St. Thomas' success " lay largely in the fact that he so perfectly articulated his belief in terms apt for the intellectual world of his day." Commendable as this is to Father McKenzie, those terms cannot be apt for the mid-twentieth century " unless we realize that the intellectual world now does not speak the language of the thirteenth century." He continues:

> What I find lacking in the Thomistic synthesis—and in speculative theology as a whole—are historical and critical methods and approach. In modern education and in the modern intellectual world these have a place in the training of the educated man which they did not have in the thirteenth century; our students will meet them in their humanistic disciplines. The historical and critical attitude exhibited by St. Thomas—and by most classic writers of theology down to our own century—does not meet the standards of modern historians and critics.[7]

What Father McKenzie says of the historical and critical attitude of St. Thomas not meeting the standards of modern historians and critics is true, of course. But the method here suggested reads more like a compromise with ignorance than the defense of truth—at least to the reader who sees truth betrayed in the unsound historical and critical attitude of any protagonist whatever of the flux-philosophy.

Both in American and in German universities there is currently a new concern and fascination with that philosophy. The influence of the German rationalist who inaugurated the modern philosophy of history had already spread darkly through our culture. Hegel's absolute-state dogma with its many and varied political forms; Hegel's subjectivism with its many varieties in idealism, rationalism, existentialism, scientism, pragmatism;

[6] " Theology and Jesuit Education," *Thought*, XXXIV (1959), 345-357.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 353. The quotation occurs also in Father McKenzie's " Training Teachers of College Theology," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, XIX (1956), 101 ff.

and finally Hegel's historicism (appearing as it does in the Toynbee view of history and the neo-orthodox Protestant theologies) have somehow all appealed much to the modern mind. The postulate which underlies the great idealist's *System* is deceptively simple: The world and all that happens in it is a historically conditioned phase in the self-realization of the *Weltgeist* for which all forms are passing affairs as it marches forever onward. All forms indeed pass by dialectic necessity—dialectic since the rising takes place on a mental ladder whose rungs are respectively art, religion and philosophy. The whole *System*, nevertheless, destroys at the outset the possibility of philosophical authority by its primal postulate of the flux. At its heart stands a fundamental contradiction: and the contradiction is itself the keystone of the whole structure.

Yet a German scholar told me recently of the eagerness with which the young philosophers in his native land are " returning to the study of Hegel." A young American Jesuit informed me at about the same time of his own wish to do for Hegel what St. Thomas did for Aristotle. Let us hope the young Jesuit succeeds, all but impossible as the task appears. When Heinrich Heine, the German poet who repudiated Hegel on his deathbed after following him all his life, saw his former philosophy teacher in a new light, he compared the *Maestro's* subtleties to those of " the bluestocking without feet " in Eden. But, said Heine, the tempter of our first parents put in a few words (" Ye shall be as gods ") what Hegel had spun out so voluminously in his spider-web labyrinths of dialectic. Not only Hegel but Marx—to whose movement Heine first gave the name of Communist—was seen by the dying poet as bent on destroying all that is precious to man: his personality, his freedom, his hope of immortality.

The sophistries Heine was to see in Hegelianism, sophistries that his Danish contemporary Kierkegaard fought against heart and soul, have been visited on Europe and the whole world in ways too obvious to need recounting. Hegel's philosophy of history with its absolute-state doctrine affected us disastrously

from Bismarck's Germany to Il Duce's Italy, and from Hitler's Reich to Marxism's U. S. S. R. Kierkegaard, bitterest and keenest of critics of Hegel's *System*, saw the developmental pattern of Hegel's philosophy of history as that of the spirit of the world which must be repudiated by the Christian. But the tares had already been sown among the good wheat of philosophical truth when both Heine and Kierkegaard indicted the Hegelian historical method as not being a valid approach. If the serpent of Eden did work through the German idealist's teachings, it would seem to be through a philosophy of relativism, holding no truth unchanged in changing time and place.

III

Hegel's idea that the world and all that happens in it is only an historically conditioned phase has deeply infiltrated our culture even though this relativism is indicted from time to time as diabolical. In his last Screwtape Letter, for instance, C. S. Lewis has his " very experienced Devil " observing to his confreres: " Via Hegel (another indispensable protagonist on our side) we easily contrived both the Nazi and the Communist states." [8] Yet the Hegelian subtleties are named by such Catholic scholars as Walter J. Ong, S. J., as showing brilliant albeit partial insight.[9] And Father Ong appeals in his own dialectic to an historical and critical canon which is nothing if not Hegelian in its nature.

Read what the St. Louis educator has written in *American Catholic Crossroads* regarding the value of St. Thomas in the light of his own theory of knowledge: " We know we can never recapture the totality of St. Thomas' view of the universe, even if we wanted to, if only because we cannot forget enough of what man has thought and discovered since his time." [10] The

[8] In *The Saturday Evening Post*, December 19, 1959.

[9] " A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," *Essays in Criticism*, 8 (1958), 166-181.

[10] *American Catholic Crossroads* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 99. This statement obviously rests on a theory which would destroy all philosophical authority as fully as in the theory of the ancient Sophists.

notion that all things pass by dialectical necessity has been combined in Father Ong's " intense consciousness of knowledge's developmental pattern " (to use his descriptive for it) with a new epistemological theory which would separate the world of sound from that of vision. Indeed he seems to be saying that the two avenues of sense, sight and hearing, affect respectively what we know and affect it fundamentally. St. Thomas, however, if I have followed his argument rightly, did not concern himself with the eye and ear as anything other than the extraordinary avenues of perception they are; what he did was to relate perception to language by the use of the discoveries of the Father of Logic—discoveries which Father Ong holds the work of eye-minded epistemologists. In fact, Father Ong's criticism of Hegel is just that his dialectic is " too little vocal in preoccupation, deflecting attention from the word as word to a visualist analogue of the word." The Hegelian idea, in short, is " that-which-is-seen, reflected in an equally visualist (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) reduction of dialogue itself." [11]

Father Ong looks on sound itself as " the ground of all verbal communication," as he says in a popular essay.[12] Pre-literate man, Father Ong holds, lived in a voice-and-ear culture. But the invention of the alphabet revolutionized thinking, since the alphabet " breaks the sound itself up into little spatial parts which it reassembles on a surface in countless configurations." (Apart from the gratuitous thinking-power here granted the alphabet as such, why should the parts of written language be any less subserviently structural than those of speech?) The alphabet, the writer goes on, resulted in a manuscript culture; this was followed, after Gutenberg, by a typographical culture. But now, and hopefully, Father Ong sees a drift back to the world of sound. In philosophy, we read, " interest is veering away from logic to dialogue, from thinking conceived as a private, silent affair, to thinking seen in its full social and public setting." (Why, we must ask, should logic be held so private

[11] " A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," p. 180.

[12] Is Literacy Passé," a guest editorial in the *Saturday Review*, November 28, 1959. Our return to pre-literacy is here held a very good thing indeed.

and silent as all that? Or dialogue be considered so much more "social and public"?) The guest editorial-essay ends with the thought that "printing's monopoly is broken." For the telephone, TV, our rapid transportation systems and the earth satellites speaking to us in their "tiny beep-beeping voices" have all helped effect our return to a voice-and-ear era.

The qualifying behavioral difference which Father Ong arbitrarily sets up between speech and writing affects deplorably his whole knowledge theory. In his *Saturday Review* piece as elsewhere he declares dogmatically that now there is "a growing awareness that science itself at any moment is only arrested dialogue." In his special knowledge-and-communication theory grammar is based on the written word, linguistics on the spoken word; spoken language is an immediate response in time, but writing is mediated and reduces "the evanescence of sound in time to relative permanence in space." [13] Thus it follows for him that the spoken word is the word at first hand; the written, only at second hand.

But verbal reference does not differ essentially in speech and writing; in neither form are symbols constitutive of meanings. In the Oxford essay cited above,[14] Father Ong tries to persuade us that sounds qua sounds enter integrally into the meanings. He refers to the ineluctable interiority of literature's verbal sounds, and makes a strong plea for knowledge and communication to be considered from the standpoint of hearing rather than from that of sight which he relegates chiefly to science. And here he makes an illogical cleavage not only in communication methods but in knowledge itself.

Nevertheless, "the oral-aural notion of knowledge" instead of what he calls "the more visualist Hellenic notion" remains in Father Ong's theory the only one for the critic no less than for the artist. We read:

[13] *Ibid.* Father Ong's confusion is shared by almost all the writers on the semantic problem. The complex of relationships existing between the word-and-idea, the idea-and-thing, involves categories that are distinct and difficult to maintain in abstraction from the knoweldge-situation which is formulated and communicated in the language in question.

[14] "A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives."

Just as a poem or other work of art as word resists complete framing as an "object" thought of as clearly and distinctly outlined in space, so it resists complete framing in terms of types and genres. For these represent an attempt to define, to delimit, to mark off, and in this way conceal a visualist approach to knowledge, feeling, and communication.[15]

In this debasing of logic Father Ong is not alone, of course. But his criticism of the doctrine of universals as exemplified in the above quotation reveals something less than understanding of the traditional "Hellenic notion" he decries. Neither the Father of Logic nor any of his successors ever held that an individual thing was completely framed in terms of types and genres: quite the contrary. For the individual unit to exist at all meant that it must exist as a universal and *vice versa*. (When Plotinus said regarding truth that each fragment of it which is present as a unit lives as a universal, he followed the original Greek conception of reality, culminating in Aristotle's metaphysical monism.) That it is impossible for truth to have an antecedent framework has been the cry from Greek philosophy onward. The *that* and the *what*, or the particular and the universal, are always mutually transcendent; a developing knowledge situation, though it may show them as reconstructed in the reconstruction of each stage, shows them always—precisely as poetry represents them—as identical at each stage.

Of course it is true as Father Ong says in the *Saturday Review* editorial referred to above, that written words seem to have an essential space-order; spoken words, an essential time-order. But the artificiality of such a division is shown by a comparative study of the same thought in different languages. We speak in English of a book lying on the table. The Germans say *das auf dem Tische liegende Buch* or the on-the-table-lying book. In either instance there is an all-at-onceness of knowledge; and neither sense-avenue, whether that of hearing or sight, fundamentally affects it, any more than the varying word-orders in the examples above affect the way we know in English and German. The logical process is above time and space as it

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

is above language-forms, as the latter appear in the temporal-spatial category of all sense-perception.

IV

The cause of the present semantic difficulty is the lack of recognition of the epistemological fact that the symbols must be of ideas and objects at once. Our symbol-problem is itself the inevitable result of Kant's dichotomy of ideas and objects. The answer to the problem may well lead the lost world of philosophy back to the truth. Not only should it result in a mortal blow to such absurd semantic notions as that of S. I. Hayakawa [16] that "Definitions, contrary to popular opinion, tell us nothing about things," but it should likewise put a stop to the ultra-impressionism of our era. For our modern art is no more and no less than the reflection of our subjectivist theories in epistemology.

The wagers of the present war on words should, by their very presuppositions that words are imperfect, non-precise communicables, maintain a Cratyluslike silence. This they refuse to do, blithely ignoring the fact that their linguistic formulations undercut their arguments throughout. The complex of relationships referred to earlier as it exists between words and ideas, ideas and things, involves, it is true, two sides of verbal meaning which belong to two different, distinct categories. Yet these categories are subsumable under one principle of language function in communicating knowledge. That symbols act as ideas (and then that the ideas, if valid, refer to both the essence and the existence of the thing-referent) is actually a rudimentary semantic axiom.

If the poet's procedure—as he telescopes words, ideas and things into the immediacy of existence they show in poetry—is a valid one from the standpoint of art, it must also be a valid one from the standpoint of the semanticist. His use of sound is, to be sure, his way of revealing beauty in his own art medium of language; it is comparable to the sculptor's, the

[16] *Language in Action* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946), p. 98.

painter's and every other artist's use of some relatively neutral sense-material. Poetry, however, charged with meaning as it is at the art-material level, shows the conceptual and existential aspects of language as synthesized in the verbal symbols employed. Yet we may see (analogically to sculpture in the creative process) the syllabic sounds as neutral art-stuff, the first meaning level as the special subject-matter, and the final, or crowning interpretation, as the tie-up of the three in one indissoluble whole.

No more than any other artist can the poet claim firsthand creativity. What he does is to mirror our way of synthesis of universality and particularity in some specific instance, revealing language method and content at once, obviating such a cleavage as Ong's between " aural and objective correlatives," and witnessing the truth of verbal reference.

In the epochal controversy in which St. Thomas triumphed over Siger of Brabant, there was, says Chesterton, a ring in the great philosopher's words going beyond the almost impersonal patience he maintained in debate with so many other enemies. What Aquinas would have to say about modern relativists' hydra-headed truth-systems can only be imagined. He would show, of course, what the relativist can not or will not admit—that a theory of multiple truth violates reason's first principle (which is that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time) at the very start. His famed denunciation of Siger ended simply:

> Behold our refutation of the error. It is not based on documents of faith, but on the reasons and statements of the philosophers themselves. If then anyone there be who, boastfully taking pride in his supposed wisdom, wishes to challenge what we have written, let him not do it in some corner nor before children who are powerless to decide on such difficult matters. Let him reply openly if he dare. He shall find me there confronting him, and not only my negligible self, but many another whose study is truth. We shall do battle with his errors or bring a cure to his ignorance.[17]

[17] *De Unitate Intellectus*, C. 4, n. 268. Ed. Marietti, *Opusc. Phil.*, p. 90; quoted in G. K. Chesterton's *St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1947), p. 74.

St. Thomas' almost casual mention of the difficulties in the study of truth (as well as his reference to his "negligible self" in this philosophical field where he had already proved his full mastery), attests the saint's great humility. For, as Jacques Maritain writes in his little book, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, truth, in all matters transcending the data of common sense, is as hard to retain as it is to attain.[18] It is not, adds the Thomist scholar, given to man ready-made like a natural endowment; those who have had the good fortune to be born into a culture formed by it are apt, nevertheless, to accept it as matter-of-factly as the very air they breathe. Our civilization's present plight has shown how easily truth may be lost. *Facilis descensus Averni.* It is in the return that the toil and difficulty appear.

Yet, as the magistral debater with Siger of Brabant suggests in the quotation given above, truth's unity appears in the "reasons and statements of the philosophers themselves." For there is an immutable logical law, as Aristotle showed in his report on the conditions of knowledge-dependability, that underwrites science in all fields. Appeal to that law is made unconsciously even by those who would deny its existence. Furthermore, the word-art or poetry exhibits this unity as suggested above; for it shows language both in power and in act illustrating verbal reference.[19] Thus poetry offers a testimony of high though incidental value to the argument regarding the objectivity of our human knowledge. For poetry reveals beauty just through the indissociability of the verbal and logical forms, an indissociability which proclaims the inviolable unity of idea and object in the knowledge situation in question.

V

Music and meaning in poetry show *par excellence*, then, the way that logical universality and particularity unite, and, in

[18] J. Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1947), p. 43.

[19] See my "Poetry as Illustrating Verbal Reference," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXXI (1953), 1-9.

the showing, confirm Thomistic epistemology. Our very conviction of certainty in science is due to the logic of universals. A failure to understand this logic permeates the reasoning of the modern objectors to Aristotle just as it did the logic of the medieval nominalists. For instance we read in the book by Father Ong referred to above that the Aristotelian " unqualified endorsement of the superiority of the universal to the particular does not sit well with him [i. e. the Christian of today] at all." But the universal is not to be dismissed quite so facilely as this. Of course it was the concept of the universality of the middle term of the syllogism (that middle term to which the particulars rise and from which they flow) which led Aristotle to his foundation for scientific certainty as well as to the *actus purus* idea. Yet this purely human approach to the need for the first cause does not, as Father Ong believes, militate against the Christian belief in the Incarnation as " precisely a historical Person, Jesus Christ, Who is Himself unique, not universal, and yet is the Exemplar of all things, and for Whom a long history of a special historical preparation, the Hebrews, was the foreshadowing preparation." [20]

The foreshadowing preparation was shared by the Greek philosophers, just in their demand for the Man who would indeed be " the measure of all things," and as part of that demand their appreciation of the human knowledge problem. In a slight article in *Spirit*,[21] I tried to show that Father Ong's suggested solution to man's knowledge problem is more akin to that of S. I. Hayakawa, on whom fell the Korzybski mantle of General Semantics, than it is to that of a Catholic philosopher in the line of the *philosophia perennis*. The General Semantics language theory, of course, is that the meaning of words is as infinitely varied as the individual users of language, a theory that never permits any mind to find its way out to liberty and the light of day. Contrary to Cartesianism's fatal prejudgment —from which the whole array of forms of modern subjectivism and/or relativism stems—that thought being immanent cannot

[20] *American Catholic Crossroads*, p. 4. [21] *Spirit*, XXVI (1959), 52-56.

know what is outside itself, the *philosophia perennis* shows that this is precisely what it does know. Father Ong's now-visual and now-aural theory of truth with its dichotomy between the space-world of the scientist and the sound-world or the "I-thou" where persons commune with persons (and what he holds is the philosopher's and the critic's shuttling-activity between them) is only a return to the subjectivism condemned by the great Greeks, via Hegelian rationalism, which is, of course, the German development of Cartesian subjectivism. And when Ong sets knowledge by analogy with sight over against knowledge by analogy with hearing he gets the following anomalous result:

> The mind cannot get outside its limitations absolutely, but it can get outside them to this extent: it can recognize its limitations as limitations. Combined with an awareness that indefinite progress in both empathic criticism and explicatory criticism is possible, we must cultivate an awareness of the limitations within which both types of criticism must ineluctably operate and we must develop techniques of talking about these limitations.[22]

This then is the result of modern philosophy's worry about traditional philosophy's "a-historicism," an egocentric dilemma that thickens the fog for the twentieth-century apostle. Believing that the "historical outlook" is now to be taken for granted "in the better studies of medieval scholastic philosophy and of all philosophy," Father Ong equates philosophy with the formulae of theoretical physics and its need to be complemented with a detailed account of the developmental process whereby those formulae were evolved, citing Einstein as authority for the latter.[23]

But the concern expressed in our century by Catholic writers about what is called—often rather vaguely but always pejoratively—medievalism in Catholic belles-lettres [24] is itself a matter

[22] "A Dialectic of Aural and Objective Correlatives," p. 179.

[23] In *American Catholic Crossroads*, p. 99.

[24] Cf. Thomas P. Coffey's diatribe against Catholic literature (*Saturday Review*, September 5, 1959), as stultified by the "medieval" limits of Catholic intellectual effort. The writer's peevish generalities about restraints hampering the Catholic

for the gravest concern. We must ask if our current philosophical problems have been faced or solved by these loathers of medieval thought with any degree of success comparable to the scholastics at their best as typified in St. Thomas. There are just two questions in urgent need of an answer. One is: Are the philosophical discoveries of Aristotle possibly related (except as final answers to the Sophists' doubt about the power of the mind to make true judgments) to a historical period? The other question, really a corollary of the first, is this:

Is the historical and critical canon itself not a dated hypothesis which a proper understanding of the teachings of traditional philosophy must discard? An understanding or appreciation of the actual relation of sense-perception to language—[25] which is precisely what furnished the corrective to Heraclitus—as it leads to the knowledge of how minds attain to things, and as formulated in the work of Aristotle and his Christian interpreter, St. Thomas, is assuredly called for in our current Catholic scene. However, its apologists are challenged as never before in the history of Catholicism since the Reformation.

If the Thomist report on the nature of knowledge has outlasted the centuries—and it has, and will outlast those to come—as that report refined and extended the Aristotelian findings, the reason is that the truth that we can know (and can know that we can know) remains universally operative. What requires many a twist and turn of labyrinthine logic to declare requires the firm line of the *philosophia prima* through the maze of just how our reliable knowledge does attain to minds also in the act of knowledge of things; and the very difficulty of grasp of that philosophy proves a stumbling-block to our weak ease-loving natures. But what other philosophy besides that of St. Thomas has shown so lucidly the common-sense fact of

author in an otherwise free country are based, it is true, on his own Five-Inch Shelf of those he holds cribbed, cabined and confined to the point of suffocation. His over-all indictment is that Catholic literature wishes to return to another age rather than make its home in the present world.

[25] See my "Language and Sense Perception," *The Thomist*, X (1947), 56-74.

the objectivity of knowledge? What other philosophy is available for the true apostle's personal or public use?

Now as always the truth of Father Farrell's own sure knowledge that "the apostle's harvest field is the heart of a man; only God can enter there to sow and till and reap" is the cornerstone of the Christian *Weltanschauung*, the first and last wisdom of the worker in the apostolate who must come to the end of his road knowing himself an unworthy servant. For "the fruits of his apostolate are always so evidently much more God's than man's." And this is true whatever the age, the risks and difficulties, and whatever the apostle's labors. The thesis of Father Farrell which is also the thesis of this paper is that those labors are specially challenging ones in a world that lacks the natural prerequisite for supernatural life in its loss of the true philosophy; but if the would-be apostle in his endeavor to bring joy to sad pagans compromises with pagan philosophy he too can be only swallowed up in the quicksands that wait the blind leader of the blind.

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REFLEXION ON THE QUESTION OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IN CONTEMPORARY THOMISTIC METAPHYSICS

PART TWO

(Continued from previous number)

SECTION II.

REFLECTIVE JUDGMENT ON METAPHYSICS' CONSIDERATION OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Introduction

METAPHYSICS perfects the reflexion upon itself, proper to it by right, in judgments regarding the attainment of truths within the process of its own scientific discovery. Such judgments are advanced in the light of those principles which are regulative of metaphysics' nature and proportion to such truths. The consideration of God's existence is to be judged in conformity with the principles of extension and limitation, contained in the statement that metaphysics considers God not as subject, but as principle of its subject. As is apparent from elements involved in the varied treatments of the question of God's existence, this judgment must be borne, first of all, upon the immediate approach to the question; secondly, upon the actual attainment of God's existence in metaphysics. This final section, consequently, will proceed along these lines:

I: Judgment concerning the approach to the question of God's existence.

II: Judgment concerning the actual attainment of God's existence.

I. Judgement Concerning the Approach to the Question of God's Existence

A. On the General Order to be Followed in This Approach

The principles regulative of metaphysics' proportion to the attainment of truths about God indicate that such attainment is the science's realization of its end. For in its search for perfect knowledge of reality, the science must consider the first cause of its subject, being in common. Since this subject is to be understood in an exclusive sense, the consideration of God as principle of this subject is the sole manner of considering Him that falls within metaphysics' competence. This is the position that must guide both the order of metaphysics' approach to the question of God's existence and the judgment asserting the doctrinal place of this question. This judgment must assess this approach by calculating its validity within the process of scientific discovery made by metaphysics as it seeks its end, the perfect knowledge of its proper subject. Because of the status of the question as variously developed by Thomistic authors, this judgment will be directed first towards the general order of the approach of metaphysics to God's existence, and then to the particular issue of the relevance of the nominal definition of God in this approach.

1. *Context of the question in the Summa Theologiae.*

The focal point, both as source and as area of controversy, for Thomist considerations of God's existence continues to be question two of the First Part of the *Summa Theologiae*. The familiar articles deal of course with the proposition *God exists*, with regard to its evidence, its demonstrability and its demonstration. To view this question in its native theological setting is of some importance to the judgment regarding its pertinence to metaphysics.

About the proposition *God exists* (*Deum esse; an Deus sit*), the constant single point of reference in the question in the

Summa, St. Thomas' comments are to be recalled. From the prologue to question two, it is apparent that he locates it carefully within the framework of *sacred doctrine,* whose principal intention is to develop knowledge concerning God. The question of God's existence is to be dealt with in the part which considers God in Himself, and specifically in connection with the treatment of the divine essence. First among the questions to be proposed about the divine essence is: *An Deus sit, does God exist?* [1] From its context, then, in the *Summa,* question two is properly a theological question proposed concerning theology's proper subject, God. The proposition *God exists* occurring throughout the question, has as its subject God, the proper subject of sacred theology.

This theological context of the question is not simply a matter of the logical order of the question; it includes as well its doctrinal place as properly theological. This is evident from the basis for the questions proposed concerning God's existence. The whole question of God's existence is proposed by theology, St. Thomas notes, for this reason:

> Now among the inquiries that we must undertake concerning God in Himself, we must set down in the beginning that whereby His existence is demonstrated, as the necessary foundation of the whole work. For, if we do not demonstrate that God exists, all consideration of divine things is necessarily suppressed.[2]

Since a rational demonstration of God's existence pertains to theology, the bases for the discussion of the self-evidence of the proposition, and of its demonstrability, are indicated. For if the proposition is indeed self-evident, as some have alleged, any demonstration of it is superfluous; if it can be known solely by faith, no demonstration of it is possible, as others, moved by

[1] Cf. *Summa Theol.,* I, q. 2, prol.

[2] Inter ea quae de Deo secundum seipsum consideranda sunt, praemittendum est, quasi totius operis fundamentum, consideratio qua demonstratur Deum esse. Quo non habito, omnis consideratio de rebus divinis necessario tollitur. I *Cont. Gent.,* c. 9. (Transl., I, 78). The translation of *Quo non habito* is questionable, as will be discussed later.

the weakness of some proofs advanced, have alleged.[3] In connection with the latter remark, the reason for the actual demonstration of God's existence in theology is also implied. For there are valid, strong proofs, accessible to reason, for God's existence. Such proofs fall within the scope of philosophical knowledge. But they pertain to theology as well, and in virtue of the formal aspect under which theology considers all matters, namely, insofar as they are divinely *revealable*.[4] The truth that God exists has certainly been revealed: it has also been revealed that this truth is attainable by the power of human reason alone. Thus in considering the rational demonstration of God's existence, theology is dealing with a truth that is not foreign to its interest.[5]

As wisdom, theology has the prerogative of judging concerning the findings of all purely rational science, insofar as they have any bearing upon the proper subject of theology.[6] In approaching the question of God's existence the theologian is not doubting it even hypothetically, since the very principles of theology are a " kind of impression of God's own knowledge." But these same principles tell the theologian that the truth of God's existence is within the competence of human reason. He is obviously aware of the philosophical attitudes towards the question. Thus it pertains to him to consider and to manifest

[3] Cf. *ibid.*, c. 10: Haec autem consideratio qua quis nititur ad demonstrandum Deum esse, superflua fortasse quibusdam videbitur, qui asserunt quod Deum esse per se notum est, ita quod eius contrarium cogitari non possit et sic Deum esse demonstrari non potest.

c. 12: Est autem quaedam aliorum opinio praedictae positioni contraria, per quam etiam inutilis redderetur conatus probare intendentium Deum esse. Dicunt enim quod Deum esse non potest per rationem inveniri sed per solam vim fidei et revelationis est receptum. Ad hoc autem dicendum moti sunt quidam propter debilitatem rationum quas aliqui inducebant ad probandum Deum esse.

[4] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 3: Quia igitur sacra scriptura seu doctrina considerat aliqua secundum quod sunt divinitus revelata, omnia quaecumque sunt divinitus revelabilia communicant in una ratione formali obiecti huius scientiae. Cf. also ad 2; a. 1, ad 2.

[5] In *I Sent.*, d. 3, *divisio primae partis textus*, the words of St. Paul, *Invisibilia Dei*, etc., are seen as regulative of the theological discussion of God's existence.

[6] Cf. *Summa Theol., loc. cit.*, a. 6.

the truth according to its rational mode of knowability by adopting, judging and perfecting rational demonstrations of it. Indeed, the weakness of some philosophical arguments advanced add urgency to this task.[7] The question of God's existence does not " laicize " a whole section of theology.[8] The function of the theologian to manifest " how what is said is true," with regard to the matters he proposes,[9] places the question of God's existence within the theological context.

The theological character of the question is apparent as well from its origin and from its mode of procedure in the *Summa*. The origin of the question as it is proposed in article one indicates the theological character. For such a question as that of the self-evidence of God's existence could never occur at the outset of any purely philosophical investigation, rooted as it is for its materials in what is available from the sensible order. There is no experience which would warrant a question about the objective immediacy, the self-evidence of a thing's existence.

> . . . to be (*esse*) is not perfectly included in the notion of any creature, since the existence of any creature is diverse from its quiddity; therefore of no creature can it be said that it is self-evident that it exists.[10]

For the theologian, concerned with the data of revelation, the existence of God is a fact. As to his proper function regarding this truth, the manifestation of *how* it is true, there is a

[7] Cf. I *Cont. Gent.*, c. 3; c. 9; cf. also note 3 above.

[8] Cf. Motte, A., O. P., " Théodicée et Théologie chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Révue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* (1937), p. 20.

[9] Cf. *Quodl.* IV, q. 9, a. 3 (ed. Marietti, 83; in older editions, *Quodl.* IV, a. 18, v. g Parma; Mandonnet): Quaedam vero disputatio est magisterialis in scholis non ad removendum errorem sed ad instruendum auditores ut inducantur ad intellectum veritatis quam intendit: et tunc oportet rationibus inniti investigantibus veritatis radicem, et facientibus scire quomodo sit verum quod dicitur: alioquin si nudis auctoritatibus magister quaestionem determinet, certificabitur quidem auditor quod ita est, sed nihil scientiae vel intellectus acquiret et vacuus abscedet.

[10] Hoc autem quod est esse in nullius creaturae ratione perfecte includitur, cuiuslibet enim creaturae esse est aliud ab eius quidditate, unde non potest dici de aliqua creatura quod eam esse sit per se notum et secundum se. *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 12.

certain status already given to this question. There is reason in the *I am who am* of Exodus for suggesting its self-evidence; St. Paul's words *invisibilia Dei* . . . indicate the natural knowability of this truth. Thus in the origin of the development of the question of God's existence revealed principles are very much involved. The theologian as such must determine that rational demonstrations are neither superfluous nor impossible; he must seek to advance such demonstrations.

The theological character of the question in the *Summa* is clear also from its mode of procedure. The reasons for the need and the possibility of demonstrating God's existence advanced in articles one and two would be indeed incongruous in a purely philosophical consideration. The need to demonstrate God's existence is established because the objective self-evidence, by reason of identity of essence and existence in God, is not available to human reason. The possibility of such a demonstration, *a posteriori,* relies upon the truth that, since God is the Creator, His effects are available to lead to His existence as their cause. A purely philosophical search into God's existence could hardly employ such truths in order to prepare the way for the demonstration of that existence. But to the theologian such a procedure is entirely consonant with the nature and method of sacred doctrine, whose principles are revealed, whose dominion extends over all natural truths, which he can judge and employ in the manifestation of truths concerning its proper subject, God.

The theology of St. Thomas, consonant with the proper theological order,[11] begins with the consideration of God Himself. Because it pertains to the theologian to manifest how the things theology teaches are true, he turns to the demonstration

[11] Cf. II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 4: Exinde etiam est quod non eodem ordine utraque doctrina procedit. Nam in doctrina Philosophiae quae creaturas secundam se considerat et ex eis in Dei cognitionem perducit, prima est consideratio de creaturis et ultima de Deo. In doctrina vero fidei quae creaturas non nisi in ordine ad Deum considerat, prima est consideratio Dei et posterior creaturarum. Et sic est perfectior, utpote Dei cognitioni similior, qui seipsum cognoscenes alia intuetur. Cf. also *In De Trin.*, Prol.; and q. 2, a. 2.

of God's existence.[12] The subject of the proposition *God exists,* is the proper subject of theology. The inquiry is conducted theologically, by reason of the principles of theology, and which the sapiential employment of principles of reason to which theology has an eminent right. The whole procedure of the question is to be appreciated solely in its theological grounding and context: it is a question that begins with God, that deals with the truth that God exists, according to the demonstrability of this truth to the human mind, *per ea quae facta sunt.*

2. *Judgment on the philosophical procedure*

a. On the " manualist " procedure

What then is to be said of the practice of incorporating question two of the *Summa Theologiae* into metaphysics? The principles governing the proportion of metaphysics towards the truth about God indicate that He is not the subject of the science or of any special metaphysics. Not having God as its subject, no rational science should begin with Him after the manner of sacred theology. As metaphysics approaches that phase of its development labelled " natural theology " it is proceeding, not to begin to discuss God as its subject, but to search for the ultimate principles of its subject, being in common. For metaphysics to use the order and process of the *Summa* concerning the question of God's existence is abruptly to abandon the only justifiable procedure and to assume the privileged point of view of theology, appropriating a power and dignity that belongs only to the theology that does have God as its subject; that has revealed truths as its principles.

As a process of acquisition, approaching its term, metaphysics has no power beyond that granted by its proper subject and the discoveries that subject's virtuality has yielded. For metaphysics to assume the proposition *God exists* as a problem

[12] Cf. *ibid.*, I, c. 9. Contrary to the English translation of *quo non habito*, theology does not depend for its very constitution and existence upon the *demonstration* of God's existence. It obviously does depend upon God's existence, since it depends upon Him for its principles, and since in its consideration of Him as its subject, obviously begins with the truth of His existence.

to be dealt with in the way that it is developed in the *Summa*, demands the use of truths not yet available to metaphysics, as is clear from the implications of the theological process. For metaphysics so to proceed is to cease to be philosophy.

Among contemporary works, of which the manual of Fr. Gredt is one example, such a procedure remains, the heritage from the nineteenth-century manualists, even as traces of their conception of metaphysics remain.

In order to avoid the pitfall of stating truths about God before His existence is known, Fr. Gredt begins his special metaphysics on uncreated being with a nominal definition of God, " being *a se*." Through his explanation of this term, the author has a term of reference for the discussion, before God's existence is proved, of the proposition *God exists*, as to its self-evidence and its demonstrability. As to the latter point, it is to be remarked that the proof from the *Summa* for this is not offered; rather the evidence for the demonstrability is the actual, subsequent formulation of *a posteriori* proofs.

Procedures such as this cannot but be judged as foreign to the nature of metaphysics as a process of discovery. Obviously, when metaphysics begins with a division of the subject into created and uncreated being, with God thus set aside as a distinct scientific subject, there can be no serious intent to *discover* His existence. Rather it seems to involve a preoccupation with the manner in which the proposition *God exists* is attainable by the human intellect. An apparently apologetic interest motivates the adoption of St. Thomas' procedure from the *Summa*, as the most effective development of the question. What is ignored, however, is the theological character of St. Thomas' work, on the one hand, and his own conception of the nature of metaphysics on the other. When the theological development of the question of God's existence is incorporated into metaphysics, St. Thomas' teachings are not followed on the order of philosophy, on the nature of metaphysics as a process of discovery whose findings are the result of the light afforded by its proper subject, on the relationship of the consideration of God to that subject.

The procedure involved is adopted because of a basic presupposition, namely, that God is the subject about which the work of metaphysics proceeds. But this is not so. From beginning to end metaphysics has as its subject being in common; the knowledge about God that it attains is a knowledge of being in terms of its first cause. The subject of the science, through the discoveries to which it leads, both gives rise to the necessity of any inquiry concerning a first cause, and must be the key to the consideration of that cause, which is never knowable scientifically except formally as cause.

To deviate from the lines of development dictated by metaphysics' proportion to knowledge about God, is to sacrifice its true character as a scientific process. A convenient distribution of matter is not reason enough to jeopardize the development of true science, which must be a movement from the known to the unknown, from imperfection to perfection. The assumption of the order and approach of theology into metaphysics deprives metaphysics of the one authentic way open to it for its fulfillment, the attainment of God, not as subject, but as principle of its subject.

b. The procedure of Gilson

The above mode of procedure rests upon an unrecognized inconsistency in making God the subject of inquiry, and then seeking to proceed philosophically by incorporating question two of the *Summa* as the beginning of natural theology. M. Gilson is at pains explicitly and *ex professo* to present the order of the *Summa* as St. Thomas' philosophical doctrine on the existence of God. The basis for his position has been seen in his understanding of the distinction between the *revealed* and the *revealable,* as the key to the application of his general thesis upon Christian philosophy to the presentation of the Christian philosophy of St. Thomas. As *revealable* in the Gilsonian sense, the existence of God is a philosophical matter integrated into theology by its order to the common end of all theological matters, the salvation of souls. It is a philosophical

matter, however; to follow the order of its exposition in the *Summa* is to manifest the authentic philosophical position of St. Thomas on the point.

There can be no questioning of the right, vindicated by such admirable labors, of the historian Gilson to view the question of God's existence in its most mature and most fruitful expression by St. Thomas; or of his right to draw out the insights that that expression within the framework of theology bestowed even upon the philosophical aspects of the question. But that the question in the *Summa* is to be called philosophy; that a Thomistic metaphysics which does not follow the order of the *Summa* in its consideration of God's existence cannot but betray St. Thomas and become Cartesian—these are points advanced by Gilson the philosopher, and are to be questioned.

The obligation of a metaphysics *ad mentem D. Thomae* to follow the order of the *Summa*, has been sufficiently challenged in connection with the principle of limitation and the nature of metaphysics. Something needs to be said here, however, about the interpretation of the question of God's existence as found in the *Summa*, as philosophy. To confront such a position is to touch on the notion of theology which it implies.

For M. Gilson, the *revealable* stands well for the authentic Thomistic philosophical positions, since the principal philosophical interest of St. Thomas was directed towards those truths which come under the Gilsonian understanding of that term. Consequently, the authentic Thomistic philosophical position regarding God's existence is to be advanced by following its development in the *Summa*.

This position of Gilson is a philosophical position, or perhaps it should be called theological, since only the theologian can judge the nature of theology, and its formal object. Questionable in it, first of all, is the signification given to the term "*revealable*." The context in which it is formulated (I, q. 1, a. 3 and ad 2) does not justify its exclusive application to truths which, while *de facto* revealed, are in themselves accessible to natural reason. Rather it is a term embracing all the truths which fall within the purview of theology, indicating the

formal, specifying character of such truths as they are attainable by theology.

> Because Sacred Scripture considers things according as they are divinely revealed, therefore all things whatsoever which are divinely revealable, communicate in the one formal aspect of object (*formali ratione obiecti*) of this science.[13]

From these words as they constitute the argument for the unity of sacred doctrine or " sacred scripture," as St. Thomas employs the terms, it is clear that he formulates the term " revealable " in passing from the order of exercise, to that of specification; from *esse ad posse*, to put it another way. The force of his argument for the unity of theology lies in this, that from its exercise and its necessity, theology is known to deal with things revealed. From its " operation," then the formal aspect of whatever it considers is seen to be the " revealable." Gilson's interpretation actually is quite irrelevant to the issue involved in the context from which the term is taken. Further, the term does not apply exclusively to philosophical truths which are considered in theology, but indicates that theology's specific constitution is derived from the formal aspect of whatever it considers—*quaecumque sunt divinitus revelabilia*. The unity that theology retains because of this formality of whatever it considers, is intrinsic, since all share in the one formality of object. There is nothing new here in St. Thomas' thought relative to science; rather it is a proportionate application of his usual doctrine concerning the specification of habits and potencies by the *formalis ratio objecti*. The term *revelabilia*, derived from what the exercise of theology is known to be, is used to designate the formality of object.[15]

[13] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 3. Text in note 4 above. The published English translation has been here set aside, since it completely confuses the terms *revelata* and *revelabilia*, and thus destroys the illation in St. Thomas' argument.

[14] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 1, ad 2; a. 3, ad 2.

[15] The response in article 3, ad 2, does not sustain the interpretation of Gilson. It presupposes the intrinsic, constitutional unity of sacred doctrine, by reason of the latter's formal object. Wherever this formality is verified, theology extends, even as sight extends to objects in themselves diverse, insofar as they are colored.

Because of the unity it has from its proper formality, theology remains theology when it is considering truths in themselves philosophical. For it deals with them theologically, that is as they communicate in its formality of object. The exposition of such truths, then, is not to be advanced as the authentic presentation of St. Thomas' philosophy. In all its diverse procedures, theology remains one; it remains theology. Concerned with whatever is divinely revealable, its principles are revealed truths. Thus, because of its possession of knowledge that is a share in that of God and of the blessed, it is wisdom above all human wisdoms. In its concern to manifest truths about God, it has the right to assume and to use purely rational truths. When it does so it remains theology; it bestows upon the truths it employs a new dignity within its own unity as it appropriates them to itself.[16]

In this sense, the question of God's existence as it appears in the *Summa*, has already been discussed, as has been the diversity of its procedure from a purely philosophical consideration. To designate the question of God's existence in the *Summa* as the philosophy of St. Thomas is to deprive it of its theological dignity. To advance this procedure as the one way, not fraught with dangers, to propose an authentic Thomistic presentation of this question in metaphysics, is to set aside St. Thomas' indications of metaphysics' natural way to its term, the consideration of God as principle of its subject. Metaphysics is made the recipient of the apparatus of theology without its light and its power. Metaphysics should rather be allowed a development more modest but consonant with its position and nature. Theology ought to be allowed the place of eminence which belongs to it. M. Gilson has advanced as the philosophy of St. Thomas with regard to God's existence, a treatment and an order which is theological. By the same

Natural truths are among these things of which the formality "revealable" is verified; theology can and does consider them.

[16] Cf. Muniz, Francis, O. P., *The Work of Theology* (The Thomist Press; Washington, 1953), pp. 27-28.

token he has proposed for a truly Thomistic metaphysics an approach to this question which the science as such is incapable of sustaining, since its own proportion to the attainment of God's existence is exceeded, insofar as this approach demands that God be considered as subject. To neither sacred theology nor metaphysics is such a proposal a service.

Any further particular aspects of the approach to the question of God's existence, according to various doctrinal positions already seen, can be considered in conjunction with the following point: the pertinence of the nominal definition of God to metaphysics' approach to His existence.

B. Judgment on the Nominal Definition of God in Metaphysics

The particular point that seems to concentrate within itself many of the ramifications of metaphysics' approach to God's existence, is the nominal definition of God. The vicissitudes this nominal definition has undergone historically, are reflected in the various ways it has been used and its pertinence vindicated by contemporaries. The insistence upon its role has a basis alleged to be that of St. Thomas in his statement that in the demonstration of the existence of God as cause, a valid medium of demonstration is the nominal definition of God, the subject of the demonstration.[17] Before examining the use of the nominal definition of God in metaphysics—and there is need for such an examination—it is important to recall what is involved in the employment of the nominal definition of God by St. Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae*.

[17] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 2: Ad secundum dicendum quod cum demonstratur causa per effectum, necesse est uti effectu loco definitionis causae ad probandum causam esse; et hoc maxime contingit in Deo, quia ad probandum aliquid esse necesse est accipere pro medio quid significet nomen, non autem quid est, quia quaestio *quid* est, sequitur quaestionem *an est*. Nomina autem Dei imponuntur ab effectibus, ut postea ostendetur, unde demonstrando Deum esse per effectum, accipere possumus pro medio quid significet hoc nomen Deus.

1. *Context of the nominal definition in the Summa Theologiae*

Since his employment of the nominal definition of God in theology is for St. Thomas the application to a particular case, of a familiar element in the logic of demonstration, it is of some importance to summarize the sense and function of the nominal definition.

Within the discussion of scientific demonstration, the function of the nominal definition is a requisite for a basic intelligibility of terms, a guarantee that every term employed have a definite and distinctive meaning.[18] But the nominal definition is not merely a matter of etymology. It is a definition to the extent that it delineates and identifies by expressing precisely the formality, the *ratio,* signified by the term it defines; it is qualified, however, as merely nominal in that the ontological value or status of that term as it pertains to the demonstration is as yet unknown.

In both the perfect scientific process, achieving perfect conformity with the ontological order, terminating in *propter quid* knowledge, and in the less perfect process, terminating in *quia* knowledge, the nominal definition has its place. Science is not the creation but the generation of new knowledge. It thus proceeds from preknowledge in virtue of which the intellect moves itself to the acquisition of further perfection. The preknowledge of that element which is *formally* attained in the conclusion is expressed by a nominal definition. As to the ontological value of the subject in a *quia* demonstration, this is known solely in the conclusion affirming either its existence, as cause of some effect, or its essential nature, as subject of some attribute. As to the ontological value of the predicate as such in a *propter quid* demonstration, this is known formally only in the conclusion, which asserts this predicate's necessary pertinence to the subject. In both processes, then, the preknowledge of the elements truly discovered in the conclusion is expressed

[18] Cf. *IV Met.*, lect. 1, n. 611.

by a nominal definition, since only that whose ontological value is known can be defined by a real definition (*non entium non est definitio*). Thus is to be understood the repeated formula that the knowledge that a thing is (*an sit*) precedes the knowledge of what it is (*quid sit*). Yet the nominal definition is pre-knowledge sufficient for intelligibility and for inference in the scientific process.[19]

In the *Summa Theologiae* this specific point relative to the demonstration of God's existence is made: that the effect takes the place of the definition of the cause when the existence of the cause is to be demonstrated, in such a way that the middle term is the signification of a name imposed upon the cause-subject from its effects. In demonstrating God's existence, a nominal definition imposed from His effects serves as the middle term.[20]

Against the total background of the *Summa,* however, it is evident that the function of the nominal definition of God is wider than its application simply to the question of His existence, and extends to the whole of theology as it is science. Speaking of definitions, St. Thomas states that the term *definition* refers in its primary sense to the real definition, and is the formality which the name signifies.[21] At its very outset, theology, describing itself, in one of its aspects, as a science whose subject is God, must face the difficulty of God's indefinableness, contrasted with the logical canon that science presupposes the definition, the quiddity of its proper subject. St. Thomas replies, conceding that we cannot know God's essence, yet affirming that in place of a definition, His effects, of nature or grace, are available and can be used.[22] Throughout its investigations theology uses such notions, imposed from effects,

[19] Cf. I *Post. Anal.*, lect. 1, n. 2 and ff.

[20] Cf. *Summa Theol., loc. cit.*, and corp.

[21] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 13, a. 1.

[22] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum quod licet de Deo non possimus scire quid est, utimur tamen in hac doctrina effectus eius vel naturae vel gratiae loco definitionis ad ea quae de Deo in hac doctrina considerantur: sicut et in aliquibus scientiis philosophicis demonstratur aliquid de causa per effectum accipiendo effectum loco definitionis causae. Cf. also *In De Trin.*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5.

as nominal definitions which somehow signify the divine nature.[23]

With regard to any name used to refer to God, there can be no real definition, since God's essence is not properly known. Since the formality signified by a name is that conception which the intellect forms of the thing named,[24] the names imposed upon God, signify formalities derived from His effects. This is true even of the name "God."[25] Thus when theology exercises its scientific functions concerning its subject God, the requirement of definition is satisfied by nominal definitions, expressing the various formalities (*ratio quam significat nomen*) signified by the name God as He is knowable by the human intellect.

The necessity for such a clarification is even more acute when the question of the demonstration of the very existence of God arises. Added to the general impossibility of a real definition of God, there is the problem that no real definition of a thing whose existence is unknown can be given:

> . . . before it is known of something whether it is, it is not possible properly to know of it what it is; for there are no definitions of non-beings. . . .[26]

Thus against the demonstrability of God's existence there is repeatedly alleged the objection that since the definition of the subject is unavailable, there can be no medium for this demonstration.[27]

[23] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 13, a. 2, ad 2.

[24] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 4: Ratio enim quam significat nomen est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen.

[25] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 8: Quia igitur Deus non est notus nobis in sui natura, sed innotescit nobis ex operationibus vel effectibus eius, ex his possumus eum nominare: unde hoc nomen Deus est nomen operationis, quantum ad id a quo imponitur ad significandum. Imponitur enim hoc nomen ab universali rerum providentia. Omnes enim loquentes de Deo hoc intendunt nominare Deum, Quod habet providentiam universalem de rebus . . . ex hac autem operatione hoc nomen Deus assumptum, impositum est ad significandam divinam naturam.

[26] . . . quia antequam sciatur de aliquo an sit, non potest sciri proprie de eo quid est: non entium enim non sunt definitiones. Unde quaestio an est praecedit quaestionem quid est. I *Post Anal.*, lect. 2, n. 5.

[27] Some of the formulations of the objection are as follows: *Summa Theol.*, I,

St. Thomas' response to this objection embraces two points: that in general when the existence of a thing is to be proved, the signification of the name of the thing takes the place of its real definition; and that specifically, in the proof for the existence of a cause, the effects take the place of the definition of the cause.[28] Concisely, the proof for God's existence has as its middle term that signification of the name God which is imposed from His effects.[29]

Both this objection and St. Thomas' response to it have as their term of reference perfect science, acquired demonstratively. Such perfect science is the acquisition of knowledge about the necessary pertinence of " properties " to a subject in virtue of knowledge of the causes of that pertinence. Such causes are expressed in the definitions of the subject, which is consequently the ultimate principle of the science, its basic medium of demonstration. The conclusion of the scientific

q. 2, a. 2, obj. 2: Praeterea, medium demonstrationis est quod quid est. Sed de Deo non possumus scire quid est, sed solum quid non est. Ergo non possumus demonstrare Deum esse. *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 12, *sed contra* 4: Praeterea non potest sciri de aliquo ipsum esse nisi quid ipsum sit cognoscatur. Sed de Deo in praesenti statu non possumus cognoscere quid est. Ergo eius esse non est nobis notum. I *Cont. Gent.*, c. 12: Item. Si principium ad demonstrandum *an est* secundum artem Philosophi, oportet accipere quid significet nomen . . . ; *ratio* vero *significata per nomen est definitio*, secundum Philosophum . . . nulla remanebit via ad demonstrandum Deum esse, remota divinae essentiae vel quidditatis cognitione.

[28] As to the first point, cf. I *Post. Anal., loc. cit.*: Unde quaestio an est praecedit quaestionem *quid est*: sed non potest ostendi de aliquo an sit, nisi prius intelligatur quid significatur per nomen.

De Ver., loc. cit., ad 4 in contrarium: Ad hoc quod cognoscatur aliquid esse non oportet quod sciatur de eo quid sit per definitionem sed quid significetur per nomen. Cf. also II *Post Anal.*, lect. 8, n. 6.

As to the knowledge of the cause precisely, cf. *Summa Theol., loc. cit.*, ad 2, above, note 17. Also *In De Trin.*, q. 1, a. 2: Et sic se habet cognitio effectus ut principium ad cognoscendum de causa an est, sicut se habet quidditatem ipsius causae cum per forman suam cognoscatur.

[29] Cf. *Summa Theol., ibid.* Also I *Cont. Gent.*, c. 12: In rationibus quibus demonstratur Deum esse, non oportet sumere pro medio divinam essentiam seu quidditatem . . . sed loco quidditatis accipitur pro medio effectus, sicut accidit in demonstrationibus quia: et ex huiusmodi effectu sumitur ratio huius nominis Deus. Nam omnia divina nomina imponuntur vel ex remotione effectuum divinorum ab ipso, vel ex aliqua habitudine Dei ad suos effectus.

process is the expression of the knowledge of the subject's having some property because of the known cause. Since this conclusion is truly derived from the process, the preknowledge of the definition of the subject is necessarily required. The objection against the demonstrability of God's existence proceeds according to this requisite preknowledge.

St. Thomas' replies to the various formulations of this objection retain the schema of the scientific process as consisting of subject, predicate and middle term. The subject is God. What is to be demonstrated is that He exists. That no real definition of the subject is available, St. Thomas concedes. But He denies that no middle term is therefore to be found, and thus denies the alleged impossibility of demonstrating that God exists. For there is available an adequate preknowledge, namely, of the form or nature of the effects of God.[30] Thus in the demonstration, the middle term will be the effect, in the sense that the known content of the nominal definition of God is drawn from His effects. Thus what St. Thomas evidently envisions by his response can be expressed in this way:

> God is the First Unmoved Mover (Nominal definition imposed from movement.)
> But the First Unmoved Mover exists. (Effect, movement, demands this).
> Therefore God exists.

While never explicitly delineating this process, it is clearly in St. Thomas' mind when he speaks as he does of the nominal definition of God, subject of the demonstrable conclusion *God exists.* It is intended as well when, in article three, St. Thomas states: "*That God exists,* can be demonstrated in five ways." Historically, such a process has been explicitly advanced by many authors within the context of Thomistic philosophy.

St. Thomas' determinations concerning the nominal defi-

[30] Cf. *Cont. Gent., ibid.*: Patet etiam ex hoc quod etsi Deus sensibilia omnia et sensum excedat, eius tamen effectus, ex quibus demonstratio sumitur, ad probandum eum esse, sensibiles sunt. Et sic nostrae cognitionis origo ex sensu est etiam de his quae sensum excedunt.

nition of God, then, recognize that God is the subject of the demonstration at issue; that some sort of determination concerning the term "God" is demanded in the demonstrative process. Such a determination is the nominal definition. But it is not a matter of philology, or of a dialectical determination from widely accepted descriptions of God. The nominal definition is imposed from effects. For the name of God signifies knowledge, and human knowledge about God must be derived from effects.[31] Because such nominal definitions are derived from effects, they can serve as efficacious middle terms in demonstrating God's existence. For the effects are adequately known and it is this knowledge which gives content and efficacy as a middle term, to the nominal definition of God.

The examination of the function of the nominal definition of God forcefully emphasizes its theological context. All the elements revolving about this point are theological. God, the subject of theology, is He whose nominal definition is involved. In virtue of the principles of theology, revealed truths about God, the theologian realizes that a real definition of God is impossible, and that still there is the task of demonstrating God's existence. The knowledge that God's effects are available as a medium for demonstration enables the theologian to indicate the function and availability of the nominal definition of God in the demonstration of His existence. By reason of the character of theology itself, then, the theologian makes those determinations concerning the nominal definition of God, which are necessary in order to deal properly with the scientific question, *an sit Deus*, as this can be resolved by a demonstration.

[31] This is true even of the name "God." Cf. note 25 above. Also *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 10, ad 5: Ad quintum dicendum quod ipsam naturam Dei, prout in se est, neque Catholicus neque paganus cognoscit, sed uterque cognoscit eam secundum aliquam rationem causalitatis vel excellentiae vel remotionis. . . . Et secundum hoc in eadem significatione accipere potest gentilis hoc nomen Deus, cum dicit "idolum est Deus" in qua accipit ipsum Catholicus dicens: "idolum non est Deus." Si vero aliquis esset qui secundum nullam rationem Deum cognosceret nec ipsum nominaret, nisi forte sicut proferimus nomina quorum significationes ignoramus. Also a. 8, ad 2; *De Ver.*, q. 21, a. 4.

In conclusion, the theological context of the nominal definition of God can be stated in terms of the epistemological canons of science as they are adapted to the scientific procedures of theology. The function of this nominal definition in connection with the existence of God is intimately connected with the formal scientific question: Does God exist? (*an sit Deus*). It is a scientific question, whose subject is God, subject of the science. This question itself, *an sit,* is one of the four scientific questions which science as the search for the certain knowledge of what is unknown, poses. For science may seek to know with certitude that a subject is qualified by some attribute (*quia est*); why it is so qualified (*propter quid*); that it exists (*an sit*); what it is (*quid sit*).[32] All of these questions are said to be questions of the medium of demonstration, since they are posed in order to be resolved by demonstrated conclusions, with certitude. The questions will be so resolved only when that which is the medium by reason of which subject and predicate are necessarily joined, is discovered.[33] Further, the questions *an sit* and *quia est* are said to be questions which simply seek any efficacious medium (*an sit aliquid medium*), while the questions *quid sit* and *propter quid* seek that which is truly and properly the medium (*quid sit medium*).[34]

With a view to the character and development of the perfect process of science, there is a common adage that no science proves its own subject. For it is through the definition (*quid sit*) of this proper subject, which itself presupposes the knowledge of the existence of the subject, that the science proceeds. Thus its investigations are concerned with the questions *quia est, et propter quid,* with the discovery of the certain pertinence of attributes to its subject and the ultimate reason for this pertinence. Theology, however, is a special case. Among all human sciences, it is the most exalted. Concerned with God as its subject, it has its principles from revealed truth. As wisdom it has the function of explaining, defending and mani-

[32] Cf. II *Post. Anal.*, lect. 1, nn. 2, 5.
[33] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 6.
[34] Cf. *ibid.*

festing these principles. It is against such a background that it necessarily is faced with the scientific question: *an sit Deus?* For this truth is not immediately evident; it is demonstrable. The question is a question of the medium of demonstration, to be found solely among the effects of God, from which the nominal definition is formulated. It is not because God is the first cause that the question of His existence arises. Rather it is because God, the subject of such a science as theology, is the first cause, that the question can be answered demonstratively, through a medium which is a nominal definition, imposed from God's effects.

Thus just as the scientific question concerning God's existence has its proper place in the context of theology, so also does the nominal definition of God. It is a key to the solution of the scientific question which cannot be resolved via a real definition. With the medium of demonstration, the signification of the name God, assigned in general, as the answer to the problem of the demonstrability of God's existence, the scientific question *an sit Deus* is resolved in the *Summa* by setting out in the *quinque viae* the effects from which the various significations of the name God, the media of demonstration of His existence as first cause, are derived. Each of the ways leads from an effect to some signification of the name God—first unmoved mover, first cause, etc.—" which all understand to be God." [35]

2. *Judgment on use of nominal definition of God in metaphysics*

The logical exigencies urging the employment of a nominal definition of God have been advanced as operative in metaphysics' approach to the question of His existence. Historically, Suarez stressed the nominal definition as the key to guarantee-

[35] Cf. *Summa Theol., loc. cit.*, q. 13, a. 2, ad 2: Sic igitur dicendum est quod huiusmodi divina nomina imponuntur quidem a processibus Deitatis: sicut enim secundum diversos processus perfectionum creaturae Deum repraesentant, licet imperfecte; ita intellectus noster secundum unumquemque processum Deum cognoscit et nominat.

ing the demonstration of the existence of the one true God; Wolff, to preserve the unity and rigid deductive character of his natural theology, whose subject is God. Both these points of view are reflected in the nineteenth-century scholastics' natural theology, as they seek to give strict rational expression to demonstrations of the subject, God's existence, refuting atheists. Contemporary works in Thomistic metaphysics continue to insist upon the function the nominal definition of God exercises in centering the demonstration of His existence upon a precise term, one in which the proofs, especially the *quinque viae,* converge.

Yet the variety of nominal definitions proposed, the various grounds for their determination, together with the unquestionably theological context of the function of the nominal definition of God in the *Summa Theologiae,* give at least occasion to question the use of this nominal definition as the key to metaphysics' approach to the question of God's existence. Such a use must be examined and judged in the light of the principles of extension and limitation concerning metaphysics' consideration of God.

a. The principle of extension and the nominal definition of God

The principle of extension is an affirmation that metaphysics does indeed consider God, and necessarily so, as its connatural term. The proposal of the necessity of the nominal definition of God in metaphysics by contemporaries is directed towards assuring that metaphysics demonstrate God's existence. To give this precise direction to the approach to His existence, the determination of a nominal definition is advanced as a necessary prerequisite.

Striking in such determinations, however, in the variety of nominal definitions advanced, are the non-philosophical grounds upon which the nominal definitions are formulated. It is to be remembered that the nominal definition is determined as a necessary prerequisite to the demonstration of God's exist-

ence. The various definitions proposed, however, rest upon presuppositions concerning the divine nature or causality, or upon other extraneous grounds. Fr. Gredt's division of metaphysics already presupposes the existence of "uncreated being"; he chooses "*being a se*" as the nominal definition of God, when the question of demonstrating His existence is proposed. Fr. Maquart seems actually to acknowledge that the basis for introducing the nominal definition is extraneous to his own position about natural theology and the *quinque viae*. He is content with selecting "a being greater than the beings of the world," on simple dialectical grounds, as the nominal definition of God. Through it the conclusions of the *quinque viae* can be reduced to a certain unity in the propositions "God exists," even while leaving the unicity of God undertermined.

The Gilsonian thesis on the nature of a true Christian philosophy of St. Thomas, is involved in employing the "I am Who am" or an equivalent, as in Fr. Smith's "cause of the existence of things," as nominal definitions of God. For according to this thesis what is involved in the demonstration is the direct establishment of the existence of subsistent being, creator of all things; to this the Christian philosopher is committed.

Canon Van Steenberghen carefully chooses "provident Creator of the universe" as the nominal definition in order to assure the scientific answer to the religious and humanistic aspects of the problem of God.

In one way or another, then, the choice of nominal definitions is dictated by a non-philosophical motivation. The actual determination of the nominal definition, since it is seen as a prerequisite to the question of God's existence, must rely upon sources other than philosophical knowledge, whether these be faith, theology, common opinion. What all such determinations fail to consider is that metaphysics' approach to the question of God's existence is its connatural approach to the attainment of its end. Whatever is involved in this approach must spring from and be justified by the natural development of the

science. Even when St. Thomas employs the nominal definition of God in theology, he adheres to his own norm, that it be imposed from effects. In the authors cited there is instead a predetermination of the nominal definition of God, and the more this predetermination is " scientifically " elaborated, the more apparent becomes its extraneous character.

This is seen in Fr. Smith's determination of the nominal definition, " cause of the existence of things," as imposed from effects.[36] He seeks to establish that " cause of the existence of things " really means the effect and thus that it is truly the effect that is the middle term of the demonstration. His procedure evidences many questionable elements, over and above the strain on the intelligibility of language which he acknowledges. First of all, St. Thomas does not state that the nominal definition is the effect, but that it is imposed from the effect. He does state that the effect is the middle term in the demonstration. What is meant shows that the author has created a pseudo-difficulty. For the nominal definition as it refers to the subject is the expression of the name of the subject; it is only that, a *nominal* definition, since the subject's existence is to be demonstrated. The nominal definition, however, is imposed from the effect; its content and force as a middle term leading to the conclusion of the existence of the cause, are derived from the effect, whose intelligibility and existence demand what is expressed in the nominal definition.[37]

Even granted that the difficulty raised were genuine, however, the author's solution is dubious. It involves a logical fallacy based upon a misinterpretation of St. Thomas' doctrine concerning passive creation in order to explain how the nominal definition really means the effect when it says cause. The logical fallacy is an equivocation with the term " creation." " Cause of the existence of things " is shown to mean the effect,

[36] Cf. Part One of this study, pp. 81 ff.

[37] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 2, and ad 2; II *Post. Anal.*, lect. 1, nn. 6, 8 and especially the distinction between the search for the medium formally, and the search for that which is the medium: id quod est medium est ratio eius de quo quaeritur . . . an simpliciter.

the creature, because creation is in the effect, is in the creature and is a creature. The author argues: creation is an effect, is a creature, therefore it is *the* effect, *the* creature. Since " cause of the existence of things " means passive creation, the creature, the effect, it is the effect and the difficulty is solved. The logical fallacy consists in the passage from this, that passive creation is *a* thing, to this, that it is *the* thing, *the* effect; the passage from this that it is *a* creature, to this that it is *the* creature.

That an equivocation is indeed involved becomes apparent from its basis, the misinterpretation of St. Thomas' doctrine about passive creation. Fr. Smith would see St. Thomas identifying passive creation with the creature, with the effect. Actually in one of the texts cited by the author, the Angelic Doctor states:

> Creation (passive) is nothing else really but a kind of relation to God with a newness in being.
>
> . . . Creation taken actively signifies the divine action with a kind of relation co-understood, and in this sense it is uncreated; but passively taken, as has been said, it is in reality a kind of relation signified after the manner of a mutation, because of the newness of being implied. But this relation is a sort of creature, the name creature being understood commonly for everything which is from God. . . . Nor is it necessary to go on to infinity, since the relation of creation is not related to God by another relation, but of itself. For no relation is related by another relation. . . . But if the name creature be taken strictly for that alone which subsists which properly comes to be and is created, just as it properly has existence, then the aforesaid relation is not something created but something concreated, even as it is not properly a being, but something inherent. And the case is similar with all accidents.[38]

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[38] . . . creatio (passiva) nihil est aliud realiter quam relatio quaedam ad Deum cum novitate essendi.

Ad secundum dicendum quod creatio active accepta significat divinam actionem cum quadam relatione cointellecta, et sic est increatum; accepta vero passive, sicut dictum est, realiter relatio quaedam est significata per modum mutationis ratione novitatis vel inceptionis importatae. Haec autem relatio creatura quaedam est, accepto communiter nomine creaturae pro omni eo quod est a Deo. Nec oportet procedere in infinitum quia creationis relatio non refertur ad Deum alia relatione

The omissions made by the author from this text, the failure to employ the precise distinction between "creature taken commonly" and "creature taken strictly," could alone warrant Fr. Smith's interpretation and explanation. Creation, taken passively, is a relation, an accident whose subject is the creature, the subsisting being; whose term is God, the Creator; whose fundament is the creative action of God by which the creature receives existence. The teaching of St. Thomas forbids the equation of this relation, passive creation, with the beings of this world, with creatures. Rather it is something in creatures, something concreated with all creatures. Passive creation does not mean *the* creature, *the* effect; it is only *a* creature in a wide sense of the term. The equivocation in Fr. Smith's

reali, sed seipsa. Nulla enim relatio refertur alia relatione. . . . Si vero nomen creaturae accipiamus magis stricte pro eo tantum quod subsistit (quod proprie fit et creatur sicut proprie habet esse) tunc relatio praedicta non est quoddam creatum, sed concreatum, sicut nec est ens proprie loquendo, sed inhaerens. Et simile est de omnibus accidentibus. *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 3, corp. and ad 2.

Cf. also II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 18: Non enim est creatio mutatio, sed ipsa dependentia esse creati ad principium a quo statuitur. Et sic est de genere relationis. Unde nihil prohibet eam in creato esse sicut in subiecto. . . . Apparet autem si creatio relatio quaedam est quod res quaedam est: et neque increata est: neque alia relatione creatur: Cum enim effectus creatus realiter dependet a creante, oportet huiusmodi relationem esse rem quamdam. Omnis autem res a Deo in esse producitur. Est igitur in esse a Deo producta. Non tamen alia creatione creatur quam ipsa creatura prima quae per eam creata dicitur. Quia accidentia et formae, sicut per se non sunt, ita nec per se creantur, cum creatio sit productio entis: sed sicut in alio sunt, ita aliis creatis creantur.

Summa Theol., I, q. 45, a. 3, ad 2: Ad secundum dicendum . . . creatio passive accepta est in creatura et est creatura.

ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod creationis secundum quod significatur ut mutatio, creatura est terminus; sed secundum quod vere est relatio, creatura est eius subiectum, et prius ea in esse, sicut subiectum accidente; sed habet quamdam rationem prioritatis ex parte obiecti ad quod dicitur, quod est principium creaturae.

Responsio ad Joannem Vercellensem, De Articulis CVIII Sumptis ex Opere Petri De Tarantasio, q. 95: Quod vero nonagesimo quinto ponitur, *creatio passio in creatura est, et est accidens eius et posterius ea naturaliter secundum rem*, verum est quod creatio secundum rem nihil ponit in creato nisi relationem tantum, a quo habet esse, quae est quoddam accidens: et haec quidem relatio quantum ad aliud esse quod habet in subiecto, accidens quoddam est et posterius subiecto; sed inquantum est terminus actionis divinae creantis habet quamdam rationem prioritatis. (Ed. Marietti, *Opusc. Theol.*, I, 238).

explanation is thus quite patently based upon a misinterpretation of doctrine.

Apart from this, the whole procedure is a strange approach to the discovery of the existence of God in metaphysics. The nominal definition as a prerequisite is explained and determined through the doctrine of creation, and specifically through a finely discerned point within that doctrine: a relation, passive creation, whose intelligibility is as subtle as its entity. Certainly it should be supposed that if the nominal definition does have a role to play, it should aid the process of discovery and thus be an element more known than that to whose discovery it is offered as a key, the existence of God. Of no element that depends for its determination upon the meaning of passive creation, either in Fr. Smith's sense or in that of St. Thomas, can this supposition be verified. Fr. Smith's elaboration of the nominal definition of God, then, strongly emphasizes the philosophically questionable grounds which the predetermination of this nominal definition as the approach to God's existence seems to entail.

A similar charge can be substantiated in Canon Van Steenberghen's determination of the nominal definition of God as "provident creator of the universe." [39] In his own formulation of the philosophical problem of God, perhaps the notion is necessarily pre-established. For what philosophy is to establish, he states, is the true God, the God of human destiny and religion. That this is the formal function of the question of God in regard to metaphysics' intrinsic and connatural finality, has already been questioned. In terms of the Canon's position, the nominal definition of God is explicitly necessitated in order to establish scientifically, preconceived notions concerning God. The nominal definition of God is not imposed from effects, as St. Thomas states. But it is difficult to see how this nominal definition of God can be an approach to the question of His existence. The terms "provident" and "creator" both have precise scientific meanings, expressing truths about divine

[39] Cf. Part One, pp. 64 ff.

causality which are not available prior to knowledge of the existence and some knowledge of the nature of God. Perhaps it could be alleged that they are not meant by the author in their scientific sense but are broad, common acceptations which will lead to the solution satisfying both humanistic and religious connotations of the name God. But it is the author himself who insists that the nominal definition must embrace terms that are scientifically definable, since it is a scientific question that is at stake. Thus it seems that the nominal definition "provident creator of the universe" involves extraneous suppositions if it be taken strictly, scientifically, or that, if it be taken to signify common preconceived notions, it cannot serve the scientific purpose for which it was devised.

The proposal of the nominal definition of God as an approach to the question of God's existence in metaphysics, is apparently dictated by a desire to assure metaphysics' attainment of God; by the alleged necessity of focusing the demonstration of His existence. But the realization of the non-philosophical grounds for the predetermination of this nominal definition provides the occasion for the following judgment: in the light of the principle of extension, the nominal definition of God is not necessary as a prerequisite to metaphysics' attainment of His existence. The principle of extension affirms that metaphysics does indeed attain God, in stating that it considers Him as principle of its subject. The reason for this extension is the connatural finality of metaphysics as the highest of the speculative sciences. As such it seeks of its nature to attain, as exhaustively as is possible to the human reason, the ultimate intelligibility of reality, by gaining science of its proper subject, being in common. As its term, then, it is ordanied to the attainment of the first cause of being in common. Thus it extends to a knowledge of God.

This latter identification or equation of metaphysics' attainment of the first cause with its attainment of God has been made constantly in these pages. Such an identification is quite different from the predetermination of a nominal definition of God in order to guarantee the demonstration of His existence.

Some such identification seems to be suggested by St. Thomas in virtue of the term *divine*, in the text of the *De Trinitate* itself. A synthesis of metaphysics' attainment of the principles common by causality to all beings is indicated. Then St. Thomas points out that such principles are as such greatest in being, most complete, most actual, immobile and immaterial.

> And such things are divine realities, because if the divine exists anywhere, it exists especially in such an immaterial and immobile nature.[40]

St. Thomas makes this identification of what metaphysics attains at its end in conjunction with his observations about the nature and extent of metaphysics, and of its right to its historic denomination as " divine science." It is not without significance that he indicates first the connatural acquisitive process of metaphysics, proceeding in accord with its scientific structure, and shows what sort of things the principles common by causality to all beings must be, before making the identification of these as " divine."

The principle of extension rests for its validity upon the very nature of metaphysics and its proportion to its discoveries. Metaphysics is recognized as necessarily attaining the first cause of being in common and some knowledge of what that cause must be in order to fulfill its role as cause. In this sense, metaphysics is said to consider God. The latter identification can be justified through the signification of the term " divine," as equivalent to what the first cause of all being must be. It can be based as well upon the concrete environment of Thomistic metaphysics, the Christian environment in which it flourishes. To the Christian metaphysician the term reached by metaphysics in attaining the first cause is obviously to be identified with God. This is evidently what prompted the remark of Fr. Finili that it is the Christian who recognizes the philosophical approach to *God* for what it is.[41] Certainly the

[40] Cf. *In De Trin.*, q. 5, a. 4, ed. Wyser, 48. Cf. also Arist., *Met.*, E (VI), 1026 a15-20.

[41] Cf. Part One, pp. 86 ff.

early Thomists and St. Thomas himself made such a simple identification of, for example, the first mover with God.[42]

Such a simple identification of what metaphysics does attain is a simple recognition of a fact. It is quite different from the predetermination of a nominal definition of God before demonstrating His existence, ostensibly from the signification of the name, but actually from extra-philosophical sources. Nor is this simple identification proposed as the guarantee that metaphysics attain its end. This guarantee is the natural capacity of the human intellect, the nature of the proper subject of the science through which the ontological structure of reality, considered by the intellect in the light of that proper subject, is seen to demand a first cause of all being. Left to itself, metaphysics connaturally will attain this first cause. Because its valid connatural process is respected, the identification of this absolutely first cause as God by the metaphysician who is a Christian will be all the more meaningful. To this process of metaphysics to its end, the predetermination of the nominal definition of God is not necessary; the difficulties raised by such predeterminations seem even to jeopardize this process.

To state the matter succinctly: in view of the background seen, the nominal definition of God is not necessary to the extension of metaphysics. For this extension means not that metaphysics must attain God, who is the first cause of being in common, but that it must attain the first cause of being in common, which is God. It is theology itself of which it can be said that it attains God, who, besides having a life proper to Himself, being a complete nature in Himself, is also the first cause of things, and about whom theology's scientific considerations proceed in virtue of the signification of the name God. The difference in point of view is the difference between metaphysics as divine science and theology as divine science.

[42] Cf. *In VIII Phys.*, lect., 23, n. 9: Et sic terminat Philosophus considerationem communem de rebus naturalibus, in primo principio totius naturae, qui est super omnia Deus, benedictus in saecula. Amen.

In XII Met., lect. 12, n. 2663: Et hoc est quod concludit, scilicet primum movens et primum intelligibile, et primum bonum quod supra dixerat Deum, qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

b. The principle of limitation and the nominal definition of God in metaphysics

The principle of limitation governing metaphysics' attainment of God determines that God be considered exclusively as principle of the subject of the science, not as subject. Respect for the restrictions involved must be verified in the extension of metaphysics to God as its term. For the principle of limitation is founded upon the necessarily determined sense of the true subject of metaphysics; it is this subject which as the formal concern of the science and the key to its discoveries regulates the development and orientates the procedures of the science. The propriety of any element in these procedures must be judged in terms of its pertinence to and connection with the scientific subject. In the light of this, that being in common, not God, is the proper subject of metaphysics, the indicated function of the norminal definition of God is inappropriate to metaphysics.

The occasion for such a judgment is the realization that the employment of the nominal definition of God is inherently connected with the scientific question: *an sit Deus*? This is the context of the nominal definition of God in the *Summa Theologiae*. As to metaphysics, historically it was concern with the question not just of a first cause, but precisely of *God's* existence that gave the nominal definition of God its decisive function in the procedures of Suarez, of Wolff and the nineteenth-century scholastics. Among contemporary Thomistic authors, the employment of the nominal definition of God involves the same presupposition, that metaphysics is formally confronted with the question: *an sit Deus*?

Such a presupposition is explicitly present in the procedure of Fr. Gredt, since God, whose existence is to be proved, is made the subject of a special metaphysics. Fr. Maquart, rejecting such a position, does not introduce the nominal definition of God until after the exposition of the *quinque viae*, but then does so precisely to show that the question *an sit Deus* has been resolved. Obviously in the procedures of Canon Van

Steenberghen this nominal definition assumes its prominence because metaphysics is confronted with the task of providing a scientific answer to the question of God's existence, suggested by humanistic and religious considerations. Within the Gilsonian school, Fr. Smith's systematic elaboration of the nominal definition of God is dictated by the intention of demonstrating that *God, I am Who am*, precisely, exists. The subsequent concern of the author to " extricate God from the categories " shows that it is to assure the attainment through the proofs employed, of *ipsum esse subsistens* that the nominal definition of God, cause of the existence of things, is so carefully, albeit so questionably, determined.

The proposal of the scientific question *an sit Deus* is the presupposition that leads to the use of the nominal definition of God by these authors. Yet in each case, the basis for this presupposition is opposed to the force of the principle of limitation as to the place of God in metaphysics. In Fr. Gredt's work, this basis is his conception of God as the subject of a special metaphysics.[43] For Canon Van Steenberghen the basis is a personal interpretation of the philosophical problem of God, as a scientific justification of common knowledge. The implications of the Gilsonian imposition of theology's order upon metaphysics are evidently operative in Fr. Smith's phrasing of the question of God's existence in metaphysics. In the examination of the principle of limitation itself, its opposition to such positions has been sufficiently indicated.

Since the placing of the question *an sit Deus* rests upon such questionable grounds in these authors, and since the function of the nominal definition of God is intimately connected with this question, then the use of this nominal definition in metaphysics is at least questionable. Further, however, and in the positive terms of the principle of limitation, the function of the nominal definition of God is to be judged as completely inappropriate in metaphysics. The reason for this judgment is

[43] Father Maquart's proposal of the question *an sit Deus* is seemingly a concession to tradition. His procedure, however, raises a difficulty, to be pointed out later.

that in virtue of the principle of limitation, the question *an sit Deus* is itself inappropriately injected as a scientific question formally at stake in metaphysics. Since the nominal definition of God functions properly in connection with this question, then this nominal definition of God is out of place in the science.

The four scientific questions, previously indicated, as they formally pertain to any science, adequately trace out the development of the science.[44] Conclusions attained through demonstration resolve such questions. The questions themselves are four, insofar as certain knowledge is attainable concerning either the existence (*an sit*) or nature (*quid sit*) of a thing; or concerning its having some attribute, either as to the fact (*quia ita est*) or as to the cause of the pertinence (*propter quid ita est*).[45] As to the formal relevance of such questions to speculative science, the proper subject of the science is decisive. For it is the knowledge of this subject as the basic subject of its conclusions, that is the formal concern of the science; it is through this subject, as the source of the basic medium of demonstration in the science, that the process of discovery is both initiated and ultimately resolved with certitude. The scientific questions formally regard the proper subject of a speculative science, then, as the focal point of the scientific inquiry. It is through this subject and the interpretation and evaluation of experienced data concerning this subject, that any of the scientific questions arise in the inquiry. The scientific questions formally pertinent to the science, thus, are to be judged in terms of the subject of the science. As to metaphysics, this subject is not God; it is being in common. It is in this sense that the scientific question *an sit Deus* is rejected as not formally at stake in metaphysics' inquiry at that stage denominated " natural theology."

[44] Cf. II *Post. Anal.*, lect. 1, n. 2: Aequalis est numerus quaestionum et eorum quae sciuntur. Cuius ratio est quia scientia est cognitio per demonstrationem acquisita. Eorum autem oportet per demonstrationem cognitionem acquirere, quae ante fuerint ignota: et de his quaestiones facimus quae ignoramus. Unde sequitur quod ea quae quaeruntur sint aequalia numero his quae sciuntur.

[45] Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 3-5.

The question of God's existence is proposed formally in sacred theology, because God is the subject and because the data proper to the theologian suggests and impose the question. As metaphysics approaches its final state, its subject remains being in common. The scientific questions pertinent here as throughout the science are still concerned with this proper subject. To introduce as the formal question involved, *an sit Deus*, is to change the formal orientation of the science towards it own subject; the grounds already seen for such an introduction reveal how arbitrary and unwarranted it is.

What then is the scientific question at stake, connaturally arising at the outset of metaphysics' final stage? Among the four scientific questions, the two whose implications are operative in the approach to " natural theology " are these: *quia ita est*, that a subject is qualified in a certain way; and *propter quid ita est*, the reason for this qualification. In terms of metaphysics, through the proper subject the process of the science reaches the realization that there are beings which are limited (*quia*). Such a realization imposes the corresponding scientific question, the question of the *propter quid*.[46] What is in detail involved in the origin of this question will be subsequently indicated; here it is the significance of the scientific questions as formally pertinent to metaphysics' development that is important.

As perfect science, metaphysics, beginning with the knowledge of its proper subject, seeks to attain with certitude all that necessarily pertains to the subject, all its properties, in the sense in which this term embraces whatever is involved in the total intelligibility of the subject.[47] It seeks to know what must be attributed to the subject in terms of the proper reason for this attribution. As science of the real, metaphysics must

[46] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 4. Deinde cum dicit: cum autem scimus etc. manifestat consequentem quaestionem . . . et dicit quod cum scimus *quia ita est*, quaerimus *propter quid ita sit*. Puta cum scimus quia sol est deficiens per eclipsim et quod terra mota est in terraemotu, quaerimus propter quid sol deficiat aut propter quid terra moveatur. . . .

[47] Cf. *In De Trin.*, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3.

consider the beings of experience in terms of the formal aspect of the subject, *habens esse*. In virtue of this formal examination and interpretation of experience, at the stage of metaphysics' development involved in "natural theology" certain knowledge of beings as limited (*quia*) has been attained. Such knowledge is derived from the realization of the real composition of essence and existence, as well as of more evident aspects of an act-potency composition in the beings of experience. The knowledge that such beings are so limited is the occasion for *wonder*, for the scientific question of the ultimate explanation of beings as so limited, the question of the *propter quid*. As St. Thomas indicates, such a question is a question of the medium, in that scientific knowledge, demonstrated knowledge, is sought concerning that which is questioned. Such a medium is the cause, since it is through the cause that perfect science is achieved.[49]

To make explicit the basic points here involved, these words of St. Thomas offer a key:

> Though the relation to its cause is not part of the definition of a being which is caused, still it follows as a consequence upon those things which are of the very nature of such a thing: because from the fact that something is being by participation, it follows that it is caused by another. Hence such a being cannot be without being caused, just as man cannot be without having the faculty of laughing.[50]

The knowledge of limitation (*quia*), leading to the question of

[48] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 6.

[49] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 8: Manifestum est enim quod causa est medium in demonstratione quae facit scire; quia scire est causam rei cognoscere. Causa autem est quod quaeritur in omnibus praedictis quaestionibus. . . . Cf. also I *Post Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 5, in which St. Thomas explains that *scire*, the knowledge of something necessarily pertaining to a subject, requires the knowledge of the "actual application of the cause to the effect," that is, the knowledge of the cause as causing what is known concerning the subject.

[50] Licet habitudo ad causam non intret definitionem entis quod est causatum, tamen sequitur ad ea quae sunt de eius ratione: quia ex hoc quod aliquid per participationem est ens, sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio. Unde huiusmodi ens non potest esse, quin sit causatum, sicut nec homo quin sit risibile. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 44, a. 1, ad 1. The translation of the English edition has not been used here.

the *propter quid*, is metaphysics' approach to the perfect knowledge of its subject in terms of the ramifications of its dependence upon the first cause. For *ontologically* the ultimate basis for the limitation discerned among the beings of experience is the dependence of all being upon the first cause. Because of this, being is participated; in all being the basic ontological structure is a real composition between essence and existence; in all the levels of a being's total comprehension there are potency-act compositions.[51] As it develops its process of discovery, however, metaphysics first comes to a realization of limitation among the beings of experience. Through the scientific question, the question of the *propter quid*, as it is connaturally imposed upon metaphysics, the science is set upon that stage of its development which will lead to the ultimate reason, the *propter quid* of limitation in all being, namely as dependent upon the first cause. Natural theology is this final stage; it is formally concerned with the subject of the one science of metaphysics. This final stage of metaphysics begins with knowledge achieved concerning the subject and with the corresponding scientific question concerning the same subject.

In conclusion, regarding the use of the nominal definition of God in metaphysics, its inappropriateness is affirmed in order to safeguard the formal point of view of the science in terms of its proper subject. It is quite true that in answering the question *propter quid* concerning that subject, metaphysics attains to a knoweldge of the first cause; the question *an sit Deus*, it does answer *materially*. Formally, however, its concern is with its proper subject. Its search for perfect knowledge of that subject is not simply an ascent from effect to cause; it must attain the first cause, something of the nature of the cause as cause, through the exigencies of effects depending upon this cause. But it must also make actual the " application of cause to effect," [52] that is, the subject must be known in what actually pertains to it because of its dependence upon the first cause. The center of this inquiry remains always

[51] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 6, a. 3.

[52] Cf. I *Post. Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 5.

the subject of the science. The judgment that the nominal definition of God is not appropriate to metaphysics' approach to its final phase, is an attempt to reassert the formal point of view, that the subject of the science is the radical subject of all its conclusions; that the knowledge of the subject is what is constantly sought in the process of science. Such a judgment is consistent with the principle that God is attained in metaphysics, not as subject, but as principle of the subject; with the principle of limitation that is rooted in the very nature of the human intellect.

The function of the nominal definition of God is inherently connected with the scientific question *an sit Deus*. But the formal proposal of this question by metaphysics is based upon positions adverse to the principle of limitation, and thus to the nature of metaphysics as science. What the " question of God's existence " truly, in virtue of the nature of the science, amounts to is the institution of the process of solving the question *propter quid* arising from the examination of the subject of the science itself. This process should not suddenly propose the problem of demonstrating God's existence, and accent the need for selecting a nominal definition of God; rather it should concentrate upon the significance of the aspects of composition and limitation seen through the investigation of the subject of the science. These impose the need for the further development of the inquiry; they impose the question of the *propter quid*. Such a procedure respects the true nature of metaphysics and serves to integrate " natural theology " with the whole science whose subject is being in common and which considers God exclusively as principle of its subject.

If metaphysics is allowed to remain faithful to its nature and to be a true process of discovery, then the final result can only make it more suitable to its extrinsic, but noblest destiny, the use of its findings by sacred theology. If metaphysics is allowed to attain to the existence of God as principle of its subject, by concentrating formally upon the rigid exigencies of dependence discovered through that subject, then theology has a more perfect instrument in dealing formally with the question *an sit*

Deus. Whether metaphysics be considered in its own order as the height of philosophy, or as used in theology, it should concentrate upon its proper subject, not upon the formal scientific question *an sit Deus*, or upon the nominal definition of God inherently connected with this question.

II: Judgment Concerning Metaphysics' Actual Consideration of the "Existence of God"

Introduction

What was first in intention in undertaking this study, metaphysics' actual consideration of the question of God's existence, comes finally to be examined. Obviously there has emerged an understanding of this question quite different from its verbal signification. The combined effect of the twofold principle seen in St. Thomas' statement that metaphysics considers God not as subject but as principle of its subject, has been the realization that while the absolute primacy of metaphysics dictates and justifies such a consideration, it is through the subject and its exigencies that it must be prosecuted. Accordingly the whole function of natural theology within the science, in view of what has been said concerning the approach to its beginning, is to be understood in terms suggested by these words of St. Thomas:

> . . . the question *why* (*propter quid*) looks for a means to demonstrate *that* (*quia*) something is so, for instance, that there is an eclipse of the moon; . . . Now we observe that those who see *that something is so* (*quia*) naturally desire to know *why* (*propter quid*).[53]

It is not the question *an sit Deus* formally that is involved as the inception of a "natural theology" in metaphysics. The knowledge (*quia*) of aspects of limitation discovered through the investigation of its proper subject, imposes upon metaphysics the need to search for the medium through which these

[53] III *Cont. Gent.*, c. 50: Quaestio *propter quid* quaerit medium ad demonstrandum *quia est* aliquid, puta propter quod luna eclipsatur. . . . Videmus autem quod videntes *quia est* aliquid, naturaliter scire desiderant *propter quid*.

aspects of limitation can be resolved into their ultimate explanation (*propter quid*). The question of God's existence as it pertains to metaphysics is the beginning of that search, so denominated because the search, formally concerned with the subject of the science, is *de facto* not resolved until the first cause of all being is discovered.

The focal point for instituting a Thomistic natural theology is always the *quinque viae* of St. Thomas. This judgment concerning metaphysics' actual consideration of " God's existence " is thus directed towards them. Their use and function relative to the rise and the resolution of the question *propter quid* concerning metaphysics' proper subject will first be indicated. Then the use of these classic ways by Thomistic authors who for one reason or another formally investigate the question *an sit Deus* will be considered.

A. Positive Judgment on the Use of the *Quinquae Viae* in Metaphysics

1. General statement of their function.

To see the *quinque viae* as having a function to fulfill in metaphysics is not a matter of accepting a traditional consensus based on their use by Thomistic metaphysicians. Rather it is their relevance both to the origin and the resolution of the question *propter quid* concerning the subject of the science that warrants their place in the science. Before indicating their pertinence in detail, however, it is well to indicate the ontological elements involved in the ultimate phase of metaphysics.

The science is perfected when it knows its proper subject in terms of its dependence upon the first cause. Then it achieves the adequation with the ontological order that is the perfection in truth to which the science is ordained.[54] Then it becomes evident that as necessarily dependent upon the first cause, unique subsistent being, all being is participated. It is thus

[54] Cf. I *Post. Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 5: eadem enim sunt principia esse rei et veritatis ipsius.

radically composed of essence and *esse*, really distinct from one another as potency and act. Every being is therefore of limited perfection; it must manifest act-potency compositions on all levels of its realization. Thus the total perfection of any being must include a real integration, a composition between the substance and its accidents. (*Ens simpliciter est bonum secundum quid; ens secundum quid est bonum simpliciter.*)[55] Thus, as well, there comes the ultimate realization that " every substance is for the sake of its operation," as this means both potentiality and dependence in the order of operation, as well as a teleogical orientation towards the *acquisition* of its perfection.[56]

Metaphysics must arrive at such a recognition of the truth, however, according to its own process of discovery. The basic elements involved in the truth of being's dependence upon the first cause as this is discovered by metaphysics have been synthesized in St. Thomas' well known argument in his *De Ente et Essentia*: whatever has being (*esse*) as really distinct from essence is caused by the first cause, which as such is subsistent being.[57] Through the realization of the basic aspect of limitation in beings, i.e., the real composition of essence and *esse*, then, there is established the necessary dependence of being as so limited upon subsistent being. Once such dependence is evident, the ultimate ontological reason for the *essence-esse*

[55] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1.

[56] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 6, a. 3; q. 65, a. 3; I-II, q. 3, a. 2. Also I, q. 105, a. 5, in which these formally distinct aspects of dependence by reason of ontological limitation on all levels, are indicated.

[57] Cf. *De Ente et Essentia*, c. 4 (ed. Roland-Gosselin, 35): Omne autem quod conuenit alicui uel est causatum ex principiis nature sue, sicut risibile in homine, uel aduenit ab aliquo principio extrinseco sicut lumen in aere ex influentia solis. Non autem potest esse quod ipsum esse sit causatum ab ipsa forma uel quidditate rei, causatum dico sicut a causa efficiente, quia sic aliqua res esset causa sui ipsius et aliqua res seipsam in esse produceret, quod est impossibile. Ergo oportet quod omnis talis res cuius esse est aliud quam natura sua habeat esse ab alio. Et quia omne quod est per aliud reducitur ad illud quod est per se sicut ad causam primam, oportet quod sit aliqua res que sit causa essendi omnibus rebus ex eo quod ipsa est esse tantum: alias iretur in infinitum in causis, cum omnis res que non est esse tantum habeat causam sui esse, ut dictum est.

composition itself in all being, with its further ramifications, is also evident.[58]

If such a direct argument from the fundamental aspect of limitation in beings to the ultimate *propter quid* of all being as limited is available, why the *quinque viae*? The answer to the question is contained within the very argument of St. Thomas. For it presupposes beings in which the real distinction is verified. But this basic limitation in beings must be discovered by metaphysics, and the discovery is necessarily *a posteriori*,[59] from more manifest, more " superficial " aspects of limitation. It is the virtue of the *quinque viae* that they in fact epitomize such varied aspects of limitation found among the concrete existents which metaphysics considers in the light of its proper subject. They are thus admirably appropriate to metaphysics as a process of discovery. The aspects of limitation from which the five ways begin are a crucial point in metaphysics' development. They can be well used in the discovery of the real distinction, in which, indeed, their starting points are basically rooted.[60] They serve as well to institute the question of the *propter quid* concerning such aspects of limitation. The resolution of this question regarding each of the aspects of limitation from which the ways begin, actually leads to the discovery of the ultimate *propter quid* of being itself as limited and thus to the ultimate, *a priori* reason for the real distinction.

In a word, the *quinque viae* function in metaphysics by expressing its discovery of aspects of limitation among beings of

[58] Cf. Del Prado, N., O.P., *De Veritate Fundamentali Philosophiae Christianae* (Friburg, H.; 1911): *Ipsum esse per se subsistens est unum tantum et primum: in quocumque igitur praeter primum est ipsum esse tamquam actus et substantia rei habens esse tamquam rei potentia receptiva huius quod est esse.* En thesis fundamentalis totius philosophiae D. Thomae, quae philosophia Christiana iure merito denominatur.

[59] Obviously the sole *a priori proof* for the real distinction in all beings except the first cause, must be through this extrinsic principle of being. Such a proof can only be had after the attainment of the first cause.

[60] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 6, 3; q. 54, aa. 1, 2, 3; q. 77, a. 1, as examples where St. Thomas, proceeding in theology from the order of jrdgment, employs the real distinction as the basic ontological principle for other aspects of limitation in created things.

experience, and thus by instituting and leading to the resolution of the question *propter quid* concerning being itself, subject of the science, as limited. This function of the *quinque viae*, then, can be judged insofar as their starting points, their processes and their terminations, are suitable and relevant to metaphysics' objective.

2. Detailed judgment as to the suitability of the *quinque viae* in metaphysics.

a. As to their starting points.

The relevance of the function of the *quinque viae* to metaphysics is first evident from the suitability of their starting points to the science as a process of discovery. The development of the science under the light of its proper subject must be not a pure deductive analysis, but the discovery of what necessarily pertains to that subject in view of its realization in the order of existent reality. Metaphysics is a science of the real and the real that is at hand for the metaphysician is sensible reality. Simply to recall the starting points of the *quinque viae* is to perceive immediately that they all proceed from the existent order which is man's proper intellectual environment. Immediately after pointing out the formality from which each way proceeds, St. Thomas adds the evidence: "It is certain and attested by sense . . . ; we find in these sensible things . . . ; we see . . . etc." [61] It is clear, then, that each of the ways begins

[61] The commencement of each of the ways is to be noted: Prima et manifestior via est quae sumitur ex parte motus. Certum est enim et sensu constat aliqua moveri in hoc mundo. . . .

Secunda via est ex ratione causae efficientis. Invenimus enim in istis sensibilibus esse ordinem causarum efficientium. . . .

Tertia via est sumpta ex possibili et necessario, quae talis est. Invenimus enim in rebus quaedam quae sunt possibilia esse et non esse: cum quaedam inveniantur generari et corrumpi, et per consequens possibilia esse et non esse. . . .

Quarta via sumitur ex gradibus qui in rebus inveniuntur. Invenitur enim in rebus aliquid magis et minus bonum, et verum, et nobile. . . .

Quinta via sumitur ex gubernatione rerum. Videmus enim quod aliqua quae cognitione carent, scilicet corpora naturalia, operantur propter finem. . . . *Ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3.

with a fact concerning existent reality as attained by the intellect.

More significantly, however, the starting points of the ways are suitable to metaphysics' order of discovery precisely as this is to result in the question of the *propter quid* concerning the subject of the science. For the ways do not proceed merely from facts, but from the formalities of the facts involved, which formalities are interpreted metaphysically. This interpretation emerges in the distinctive introductions of each of the ways:

> The first, from movement.
> The second, from the character of the efficient cause.
> The third, from the possible and the necessary.
> The fourth, from the grades which are found in things.
> The fifth, from the government of things.

Because of the metaphysical significance of these formalities,[62] the starting points of the *quinque viae* indicate, in the order of experience available to the metaphysician, aspects of limitation, of composition, which as such institute a causal investigation, one which does lead ultimately to the cause of being as such.

Many and valuable are the insights into the order, the number, the content of the *quinque viae*, advanced by penetrating studies of illustrious Thomists.[63] But in keeping with the pres-

[62] On the metaphysical character of the *prima via*, which is a frequent matter of discussion, an excellent presentation of the metaphysical point of view of St. Thomas in his various examinations of the proof from movement, is that of Paulus, Jean, "Le Caractère Métaphysique des Preuves Thomistes de l'Existence de Dieu," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Litteraire du Moyen Age*, IX (1934), 143-145; the table on p. 146 is noteworthy. Cf. also Salman, D., O.P. in review of this article, *Bulletin Thomiste*, IV (1935), 604-610. Cf. also *In De Trin.*, q. 5, a. 4, ad. 6.

[63] Among such works may be noted:

Arnou, R., S.J., *Quinque Viae S. Thomae ad Demonstrandam Existentiam Dei apud Antiquos Graecos, Philosophos Arabos et Iudaeos Praeformatae vel Adumbratae* (Rome, 1932).

Boehm, A., "Autour du Mystère des Quinque Viae," *Revue des Sciences Réligieuses*, XXIV (1950), 217-234.

Bougges, M., S.J., "Pour l'interprétation des Quinque Viae de Saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Récherches de Science Réligieuse*, XXXVI (1949), 593-601.

Del Prado, N., O.P., "Quaestionem Secundam Primae Partis Summae Theologicae An Deus Sit, Interpretatus est Fr. Norbertus Del Prado, O.P.; Articulus Tertius An

ent purpose what is to be emphasized is the significance of the ways within the context of the development of metaphysics' discovery of the principle of its subject.

Throughout, metaphysics is led to its discoveries in the light of its proper subject. This is the source of its realization of limitation among the beings of experience. For initially the formality of the scientific subject, being, attained by reason of the judgment of separation, is an expression of things according to their perfection. The value, the explicit content of the subject, *habens esse*, as scientifically apprehended, is the definitive, the perfective aspect of the real.[64] And the real, examined according to the formal point of view of the subject of the science, leads the metaphysician to the realization of limitation. For as the existent is examined in the light of the proper subject of the science, things as they are reveal that they are not complete perfection and actuality. The metaphysician finds imperfection with perfection; beings which as such are perfect, yet also include limitation. Thus St. Thomas states:

> It must, therefore, be known that the diverse species of things possess the nature of being (*ens*) in graded fashion. Thus, in the first division of being we at once find something perfect, namely, being through itself and being in act, and something imperfect, namely being in another and being in potency.[65]

Deus Sit," *Jahrbuch fur Philosophie und Spekulative Theologie*, XXIV (1910), 114-152.

Giuliani, S., O.P., "Perchè Cinque le 'Vie' di S. Tomasso," *Sapienza*, I (1948), 351-160.

Muniz, F., O.P., "La Cuarta Via," "*Revista de Filosofia*, III (1944), 385-433; IV (1945), 49-99.

———, "Introduccion a la Cuestion II," *Suma Teologica* (Madrid: Ed. B.A.C., 1947).

The works of Fr. Muniz are particularly valuable in the mind of the present author.

[64] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 5, a. 3: Omne enim ens inquantum est actu, est in actu et quodammodo perfectum, quia omnis actus perfectio quaedam est. As has been noted, in chapter VI above, the scientific subject is attained by the apprehension of that which is formal, constitutive of it; cf. chapter VI, note 66.

[65] Scire igitur oportet quod diversae rerum species gradatim naturam entis possident. Statim enim in prima entis divisione invenitur hoc quidem perfectum, scilicet ens per se et ens actu: aliud vero imperfectum, scilicet ens in alio et ens in potentia. II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 95.

The limitation among beings is a true discovery for metaphysics. The composition of perfection and imperfection among beings of experience which "*we find*" is expressed in the metaphysical division of being into potential being and actual being.[66] For from their very origins in the Aristotelian system, the notions of act and potency have the signification of perfection and imperfection. Because the necessity for this distinction between the actual and the potential is found in the very first phase of man's scientific development, i. e., the investigation of mobile being, the notions are available and are apt for metaphysics to express the discovery of perfection and imperfection in its field of interest. The realization of actuality and potentiality among the beings of experience is truly a metaphysical consideration.[67] The supreme discovery of act-potency composition for the science is the discovery of the real distinction between essence and existence.[68]

But, as has been noted, there are other act-potency compositions, which, while in fact stemming from the very structural composition of essence and existence, are yet more superficial, more available in experience for the metaphysician. It is from such aspects of limitation that the *quinque viae* proceed. Because they do proceed from act-potency aspects of beings of experience, the formalities of their starting points indicate in a way connatural to metaphysics the aspects of limitation

[66] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 77, a. 1: Potentia et actus dividunt ens et quodlibet genus entis.

[67] Cf. *In IX Met.*, lect. 1, n. 1770: Potentia et actus ut plurimum dicuntur in his quae sunt in motu, quia motus est actus entis in potentia. Sed principalis intentio huius doctrinae non est de potentia et actus secundum quod sunt in rebus mobilibus, sed secundum quod sequuntur ens commune. Cf. also *In De Trin.*, q. 5, a. 1 and ad 7; II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 54: Sic igitur patet quod compositio actus et potentiae est in plus quam compositio formae et materiae. Unde materia et forma dividunt substantiam materialem, potentia et actus dividunt ens commune. Et propter hoc quaecumque quidem consequuntur potentiam et actum inquantum huiusmodi, sunt communia substantiis materialibus et immaterialibus creatis: scilicet recipere et recipi, perficere et perfici.

[68] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 3, a. 7, ad 1: Est autem de ratione causati, quod sit aliquo modo compositum quia ad minus esse eius est aliud quam quod quid est.

among such beings. They thus connaturally give rise to a causal investigation.

All the *quinque viae* are concerned with actual facts regarding existent realities. Thus they begin with *acts*. What bespeaks limitation is not the actuality as such, but the potency which must be implied by reason of the limitation with that actuality. All the facts from which the ways begin offer evidence of such limitation. They thus indicate act-potency compositions and consequently give rise to causal investigations.

The *prima via* takes as its starting point the actual and evident fact of movement, a direct and manifest instance of the act-potency composition in beings. Those things which are the subject of this act which is movement, are actual beings.[69] But movement as such is an imperfect act and the act of the imperfect.[70] The beings that are the subject of movement are such because of potency in them, whether the movement be generation in the substantial order, or, in the accidental order, alteration as to quality, augmentation as to quantity, or local motion as to place. With regard to operations, whether of a spiritual

[69] Cf. *In IX Met.*, lect. 3, nn. 1804-1805: *Ostendit quid sit esse in potentia, et quid esse in actu.* Et primo quid sit esse in potentia, dicens, quod id dicitur esse in potentia, quod si ponatur esse actu, nihil impossibile sequitur. Ut si dicatur aliquem possibile est sedere, si ponatur ipsum sedere, non accidit aliquod impossibile.

Cf. *In IX Met.*, lect. 3, nn. 1805-1806: *Ostendit quid sit esse in actu*, et dicit quod hoc nomen actus, quod ponitur ad significandum entelechiam et perfectionem, scilicet, formam, et alia huiusmodi, sicut sunt quaecumque operationes, veniunt maxime ex motibus quantum ad originem vocabuli. Cum enim nomina sint signa intelligibilium conceptionum, illis primo imponimus nomina, quae primo intelligimus, licet sint posteriora secundum ordinem naturae. Inter alios autem actus, maxime est nobis notus et apparens motus, qui sensibiliter a nobis videtur. Et ideo ei primo impositum fuit nomen actus, et a motu ad alia derivatum est. Et propter hoc moveri non attribuitur non existentibus; licet quaedam alia praedicta non existentibus attribuantur. Dicimus enim non entia esse intelligibilia vel opinabilia, sed non dicimus ea esse mota. Quia, cum moveri significet esse actu, sequeretur quod non entia actu essent actu; quod patet esse falsum. Etsi enim quaedam non entia sint in potentia, tamen ideo non dicuntur esse, quia non sunt in actu.

[70] Cf. *ibid.*, XII, lect. 9, 2305: "Motus est actus quidam . . . sed est actus imperfectus, et huius causa est, quia illud cuius est actus est imperfectum, et hoc est ens possibile sive ens potentia. . . . Unde actus perfecti non sunt actus existentis in potentia sed existentis in actu. . . . Unde relinquitur quod motus est actus existentis in potentia et sic est actus imperfecti. Cf. also *In III Phys.*, lect. 2.

or a material kind, it is because essence and existence are distinguished as potency and act, that substance, faculty and operation are distinguished and thus that the passage to actual operation includes movement.[71] Beginning with the fact of movement, then, the *prima* via manifests a most universal aspect of the act-potency composition among beings of experience. Even in metaphysics it is " a more manifest way," that is, of indicating the aspect of limitation among things. As such it leads immediately to a causal investigation; thus St. Thomas states: " Whatever is being moved is being moved by another," and indicates the necessary truth involved in terms of act and potency.[72]

While the *prima via* indicates an immediate aspect of limitation discovered in terms of the *actus imperfectus* and *imperfecti*, each of the other ways begins with a more particularized aspect of limitation found in conjunction with " perfect acts " and " acts of the perfect," in the order of being and of operation. For the order of act properly so called, perfect act, embraces these orders of being and of operation, and according to them the other four ways may be grouped, the second and fifth referring to the order of operation, the third and the fourth to the order of being.

The *secunda via*, proceeding *ex ratione causae efficientis* is concerned with actual operation, efficiency, obviously a perfection.[73] At the same time, however, this perfection is found as limited, since an order of efficient causes is involved.[74] The formal aspect, the *ratio*, of the efficient cause is its efficacy, the efficiency by which it produces an effect. Such a perfection

[71] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 54, a. 3; 77, a. 1.

[72] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3: Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur. Nihil enim movetur nisi secundum quod est in potentia ad illud ad quod movetur; movet autem aliquid secundum quod est actu. Movere enim nihil aliud est quam educere aliquid de potentia autem non potest aliquid reduci in actum, nisi per aliquod ens in actu. . . .

[73] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 25, a. 1: Manifestum est enim quod unumquodque secundum quod est actu et perfectum, secundum hoc est principium activum alicuius. Also III, q. 8, a. 5; II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 6.

[74] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3: Invenimus enim in istis sensibilibus esse ordinem causarum efficientium.

does not bespeak limitation, but the *per se* order of efficient causes does. For the only reason for such an order is efficiency required to produce the effect involved. If the perfection of any single cause *involved* in the order sufficed, the multiplicity, the order itself would not be found. Thus the order of causes as such bespeaks limitation. Such limitation is indicated by this: "It is neither found nor is it possible that anything be the efficient cause of itself." [75] True of the entitative order, the principle is to be here applied in the context. In the order of efficient causes, one is the cause of the other's causing; there is thus limitation found in the very exercise of efficiency. A causal investigation for the ultimate explanation of the efficiency thus found limited is consequently instituted.[76]

The *quinta via* is also concerned with the realm of operation, but according to another aspect, its finality. This aspect is of the very nature of operation; operation is the expression of the order of every being to its own perfection. It does not of itself bespeak imperfection, limitation. This is rather verified in what is expressed by the term "government," the formality involved in the fifth way. For in the context this "government" implies a twofold lack in the subjects involved. Government actively taken means "to bring things to their end." [77] Passively understood, therefore, it means to be directed towards an end, towards ultimate perfection. Things, especially those completely lacking in knowledge, are already perfect in the sense that they actually exist and are actually operating. But at the same time, imperfection is evident. For they are observed to act for an end to be gained; they act to attain the

[75] Cf. *ibid.*: Non tamen invenitur nec est possible quod aliquid sit causa efficiens sui ipsius quia sic esset prius seipso.

[76] Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7. From this place it is clear that the ultimate reason for the dependence upon the influx of the first cause upon every other efficient cause is that only that which is *esse* can properly, and by right, produce *esse*: since *esse* is attained whenever there is the exercise of efficient causality the universal dependence of all agents which are not identically their own *esse* is evident. The particular aspect of limitation and hence of dependence involved in the order of efficient causes is thus also rooted in the real distinction.

[77] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 103, a. 1.

optimum.[78] They are thus good, perfect *secundum quid*, but are seeking their perfection *simpliciter*.[79] They thus evidence the composition of act-potency. Consequently, they pose the need for a causal investigation. In terms of the way itself, the aspect of limitation is made the more evident in that beings lacking in knowledge cannot explain precisely the direction that is involved in the finality which they manifest. Thus the causal investigation is instituted in terms of limitation which bespeaks dependence upon intelligence, the adequate explanation of finality. In the fifth way, then, operation is found but as limited, directed, governed.[80]

The *tertia* and *quarta via* have as points of departure the actuality of *being*, but as discovered with limitation, composition. The *tertia via*, taken from the " possible and the necessary," begins with things which are actual, which *are*, and yet as they are do not explain the perfection of existing which they exercise. For they are " possibles." In the context this connotes a more particular and manifest limitation in terms of potentiality. The very intrinsic principles of the " possible " include the composition between matter as potential and form. For such things are generated and corrupt, and thus must be so constituted.[81] Thus they bespeak a pronounced limitation; they are possibles and as such " indifferent " to the being which they actually exercise.[82] Immediately, therefore, they pose the question of a cause:

[78] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3.

[79] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1; q. 6, a. 3.

[80] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3: Ea autem quae non habent cognitionem non tendunt in finem nisi directa ab aliquo cognoscente et intelligente.

[81] Cf. II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 54: . . . Quaecumque vero sunt propria materiae et formae inquantum huiusmodi, sicut generari et corrumpi et alia huiusmodi, haec sunt propria substantiarum materialium.

[82] Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 3: Illae ergo solae res in sua natura possibilitatem habent ad non esse in quibus est materia contrarietati subjecta. Aliis vero rebus secundum suam naturam competit necessitas essendi, possibilitate non essendi ab earum natura sublata.

II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 55: Res dicuntur necessariae et contingentes secundum potentiam quae est in eis et non secundum potentiam Dei. Cf. *In De Trin.*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 7.

It is impossible that all things that are, be such as these (possibles): because what is possible not to be sometimes is not. If therefore all things are possible not to be, at some time there was nothing existing in reality. But if this be true, even now there would be nothing, because that which is not, does not begin to be except through something which actually exists.[83]

The *quarta via* begins explicitly with perfections immediately consequent upon being, as found in existent things. At the same time, however, it indicates aspects of limitation. For the more and the less good, noble, true indicate that these perfections, which of themselves do not bespeak imperfection, are yet found in varying degrees. There is thus evidenced limitation, composition of act with potency. The fact that such perfections are actual, yet limited, imposes the need for causal investigation, as St. Thomas indicates:

> The more and the less are said of diverse things according as they diversely approach that which is in the most perfect way (*quod maxime est*).[84]

In conclusion, then, the starting points of the *quinque viae*, seen metaphysically in terms of act and potency, all indicate from the order of existent reality, aspects of composition, of limitation. They thus institute causal investigations. Because of the metaphysical import of these facts, the subjects in which

[83] Impossibile est autem omnia quae sunt, talia esse, quia quod possibile est non esse quandoque non est. Si igitur omnia sunt possibilia non esse, aliquando nihil fuit in rebus. Sed si hoc est verum, etiam nunc nihil esset: quia quod non est, non incipit esse nisi per aliquod quod est. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 3.

The Leonine edition lists the following texts as giving this, the accurate reading of the text:

A (Vaticanus—13th cent.)
D (Ottobonianus—13th cent.)
C (Vaticanus—14th cent.)
a (Venice—1473)
E (Regina Christiana—1462)
F (Urbanus—16th cent.)
G (Vaticanus—Palatinus—16th cent.)
P (Ed. Piana—1570)

[84] Magis et minus dicuntur de diversis secundum quod diversimode appropinquant ad aliquod quod maxime est. *Ibid.*

they are verified are not sufficient to explain them. Rooted in the order of immediate experience, the *quinque viae* function in metaphysics as eminently relevant to its process of discovery. Instituted from evident manifestations of act-potency composition, they clearly indicate to metaphysics aspects of limitation which pose the need for causal investigations appropriate to the objective of the science in its final phase.

b. As to their process

The relevance and suitability of the *quinque viae* to metaphysics' discovery of the principle of its proper subject, as the solution of the question *propter quid* concerning this subject, are evident also in their process to their proper conclusions. For in each case, the process is one of resolution, and it attains to the proper cause of the effect involved in each case.

In the fact that the process of the ways is one of resolution lies at least one reason why St. Thomas calls them *viae*. Discussing the " modes," the proper characteristics of the processes of the speculative sciences, he says of the total scientific evolution of man:

> The rational consideration terminates at the intellectual according to the way of resolution, insofar as reason gathers from many things one simple truth.[85]

Thus the process of science is called a " way " by St. Thomas, the way of resolution when multiplicity is reduced to unity; the way of composition when from a simple truth, many other truths are derived.[86] Concerning metaphysics itself he states: " The whole consideration of reason's process of resolution, finds its termination in the consideration of divine science." [87] For it is in metaphysics that the resolution of all reality into its

[85] Rationalis consideratio ad intellectualem terminatur secundum viam resolutionis, inquantum ratio ex multis colligit unam et simplicem veritatem. *In De Trin.*, q. 6, a. 1, ad tertiam quaestionem, ed. cit. 60.

[86] Cf. *ibid.*

[87] Tota autem consideratio rationis resolventis in omnibus scientiis ad considerationem divinae scientiae terminatur. *Ibid.*

ultimately intelligible aspects is achieved, through the consideration of the most universal aspects of the real, being in common, in its principles common to all beings, both by predication and by causality:

> Therefore the ultimate term of resolution in this way [that of finding the extrinsic causes] is reached when one attains the supreme, most simple causes, which are the separated substances.[88]

The *quinque viae* are in their process completely in accord with the character of metaphysics as it is the ultimate term of reason's way of resolution. For the process of each of them is the resolution of an aspect of limitation, according to its metaphysical significance, into its ultimate, causal explanation. Setting out from an evident, actual fact, each process ascends through an analysis of the fact revealing it to be an instance of limitation, to the proper cause which is the simple truth through which the act-potency composition is ultimately explained.

The process of the *quinque viae* bespeaks a second aspect of appropriateness to metaphysics. For the objective of metaphysics in seeking the *propter quid* of its proper subject is, as it is throughout the science, to attain scientific knowledge of that subject, knowledge through causes. The *quinque viae* have this advantage, that theirs is a process proceeding along the lines of proper causality in the resolution of the aspects of limitation involved in each. As it is the highest of the sciences, and thus perfect science, the specification of St. Thomas that the cause involved is the proper cause, applies to metaphysics' search for knowledge of its subject, and at the same time points up the advantage of this feature of the process of the ways.[89]

A cardinal indication of St. Thomas' own conception of the process of the *quinque viae* is set out in these words:

[88] Ultima ergo terminus resolutionis in hac via est cum pervenitur ad causas supremas maxime simplices quae sunt substantiae separatae. *Ibid.* In connection with the present point, cf. Chenu, *op. cit.*, 160-161.

[89] Cf. *In I Post. Anal.*, lect. 4, n. 11: Nam si propositiones demonstrationis sint causae conclusionis, necesse est quod sint propria principia eius: oportet enim causas esse proportionatas effectibus.

From every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated . . . because since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist.[90]

Accordingly, each of the *quinque viae* starts from an actual fact, which in its metaphysical significance is shown to be an aspect of limitation and thus an effect. Thus in each "an effect is given" (*posito effectu*). To find the ultimate explanation of such effects, the proper cause must be discovered. Thus each of the ways as a process of resolution proceeds along lines of proper causality. This first of all means efficient causality, since the existence of actual effects demands an efficient cause.[91] As is apparent from the text of the ways themselves, efficient causality is involved in each of them.[92]

But in the resolution into the proper cause it is not any sort of efficient cause whatsoever that is involved. To bring out what such a resolution entails it is necessary to recall certain

[90] Ex quolibet effectu potest demonstrari propriam causam eius esse quia cum effectus dependeat a causa, posito effectu necesse est causam praeexistere. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 2.

[91] Cf. II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 6: Efficiens autem causa suos effectus ad esse conducit.

[92] Cf. *Summa Theol., loc. cit.*, a. 3:

Omne autem quod movetur ab alio movetur. . . . Movere enim nihil aliud est quam educere aliquid de potentia in actum.

Nec tamen invenitur nec est possibile quod aliquid sit causa efficiens sui ipsius. . . .

Quod non est non incipit esse nisi per aliquid quod est. . . . Omne autem necessaribum vel habet causam suae necessitatis aliunde vel non habet. . . .

Magis et minus dicuntur de diversis secundum quod appropinquant diversimode ad aliquid quod maxime est. . . . Quod autem dicitur maxime tale in aliquo genere, est causa omnium quae sunt illius generis. . . .

(For the explanation of the efficient causality formally involved in this proof, cf. Muniz, *op. cit.*, "La Cuarta Via," 393; *Soma Teologica*, BAC 1, 115)

Ea autem quae non habent cognitionem non tendunt in finem nisi directa ab aliquo cognoscente et intelligente. . . ."

(That this direction is a matter of efficient causality is apparent from the following: *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 1, a. 2: Considerandum est quod aliquid sua actione vel motu tendit ad finem dupliciter: uno modo sicut seipsum ad finem movens, ut homo; alio modo sicut ab alio motum ad finem, sicut sagitta tendit ad determinatum finem ex hoc quod movetur a sagittante, qui suam actionem dirigit in finem. Cf. also I, q. 22, a. 1 ad 2; q. 103, aa. 1-4, from which places it is evident that in St. Thomas' teaching *ordinare* is efficiency with intention, pertains formally to the order of efficient causality.)

truths concerning efficient causality. First of all, the process of resolution has only the exigencies of the effect itself to direct such a process. But a basic guiding point lies in this:

> Effects correspond proportionately to their causes: so that we attribute actual effects to actual causes, potential effects to potential causes, and similarly particular effects to particular causes and universal effects to universal causes. . . .[93]

Concerned with actually given effects, the *quinque viae* as processes of resolution are, then, directed towards the determination of actual causes.

It is to be further noted that the process in seeking the proper cause, the cause proportioned to the effect, must proceed from the form of the effect.[94] For, in a word, it is the form of the effect that supplies the search with the indication of what the actuality of the cause must be in order that the effect be explained. Conversely, if any cause is not adequate, in terms of the form of the effect, it does not sufficiently explain the effect.[95]

As to what has thus far been indicated, it is apparent that the *quinque viae* do resolve effects into their corresponding causes:

I. *Ex parte motus.* Since to be moved is to be reduced from potency to act and to move is to reduce something from potency to act: the efficient cause of movement, the mover, must be a being in act.

II. *Ex ratione causae efficientis.* To be an efficient cause is to exercise efficient causality, activity, in the production of an effect since an order of causes is found, and the efficiency cannot be

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[93] Effectus suis causis proportionaliter respondent: ut scilicet effectus in actu causis actualibus attribuamus, et effectus in potentia causis quae sunt in potentia: et similiter effectus particulares causis particularibus, universalibus vero universales; . . . II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 21.

[94] Cf. Summa Theol., I, q. 19, a. 6: Cum effectus conformatur agenti secundum suam formam, eadem ratio est in causis agentibus quae est in causis formalibus.

II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 22: Omne agens agit inquantum actu est: secundum igitur modum actus uniuscuiusque agentis est modus suae virtutis in agendo.

[95] This is the constant way in which St. Thomas analyzes the explanation of any effect, in terms namely of the form of the effect and the order of dependence upon the cause demanded.

exercised by a cause upon itself, the subordinated cause is at once an effect, and demands a cause superior in efficacy.

III. *Ex possibili et necessario.* Of their nature existent things which are generated and corrupt, are possibles. They thus demand a cause superior in being, a *necessary.*

IV. *Ex gradibus qui in rebus inveniuntur.* Such grades in the perfections indicated show that the perfections are limited, and the cause demanded must be superior with regard to such perfections, a *maximum.*

V. *Ex gubernatione rerum.* Finalized operation as an effect demands a proportionate cause, the ordered demands an orderer, an intelligent agent giving the teleological determination to nature and operation.

Thus in resolving the effects to their proper causes the *quinque viae* exhibit this element: they assign a cause demanded according to the form of the effects. But to assign the adequate causes, the proper causes of the effects in their absolute significance as they are viewed by metaphysics, more is required. The cause of the *form as such* of the effect must be reached. Such a cause is one whose excellence in actuality as required according to the act-potency composition of the effect, is such that to cause such an effect is proper to that cause, belongs to it in such a way that it belongs to no other cause save through this proper cause. This causality alone sufficiently explains the effect, by explaining the form as such of the effect.[96]

To assign the cause of the form as such, the cause to which the causing of such a form is proper must be discovered. Such a cause cannot be a univocal cause, one of the same order or

[96] Cf. II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 15: Omne quod alicui convenit non *secundum quod ipsum* est, per aliquam causam convenit ei, sicut album homini: nam quod causam non habet primum et immediatum est. Unde necesse est quod sit per se et *secundum quod ipsum.* Quod enim de aliquo *secundum quod ipsum* dicitur, ipsum non excedit: sicut habere tres angulos duobus rectis aequales non excedit triangulum de quo praedicatur sed est eidem convertibiliter. Si igitur aliquid duobus convenit, non convenit utrique *secundum quod ipsum* est. Impossibile est igitur aliquid unum de duobus praedicari ita quod de neutro per causam dicatur. Sed oportet vel unum esse alterius causam, sicut ignis est causa caloris corpori mixto, quum tamen utrumque calidum dicatur: vel oportet quod aliquod tertium sit causa utrique, sicut duabus candelis ignis est causa lucendi.

kind as is the effect, but must be "equivocal," analogical, or of a superior order. The reason for this is that if a univocal cause were the cause of the form as such, it would be the cause of itself, since as univocal it has the same form as does the effect.[97]

The analogical cause of the form as such of the effect, the proper cause, is said to be the cause *secundum esse* of the effect. As such it is distinguished against the cause *secundum fieri tantum et non directe secundum esse.*

. . . For if an agent is not the cause of a form as such, neither will it be directly the cause of *being* which results from that form; but it will be the cause of the effect, in its becoming only. . . .

Thus whenever a natural effect is such that it has an aptitude to receive from its active cause an impression specifically the same as in that active cause, then the *becoming* of the effect, but not its *being,* depends on the agent. . . .

Sometimes, however, the effect has not this aptitude to receive the impression of its cause, in the same way as it exists in the agent: as may be seen clearly in all agents which do not produce an effect of the same species as themselves: . . . Such an agent can be the cause of a form as such, and not merely as existing in this matter, consequently it is not merely the cause of *becoming* but also the cause of *being.*[98]

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[97] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 5, ad 1: In actionibus agens non univocum ex necessitate praecedit agens univocum. Agens enim non univocum est causa universalis totius speciei ut sol est causa generationis omnium hominum. Agens vero univocum non est causa agens universalis totius speciei, alioquin esset causa sui ipsius cum sub specie continetur, sed est causa particularis respectu huius individui, quod in participatione speciei constituit. Causa igitur universalis totius speciei non est agens univocum. . . . Causa autem universalis est prior causa particulari.

[98] . . . Quia si aliquod agens non est causa formae inquantum huiusmodi, non erit per se causa esse quod consequitur ad talem formam, sed erit causa effectus secundum fieri tantum. Sed potest esse causa huiusmodi formae secundum quod est in materia, idest quod haec materia acquirit hanc formam. Et hoc est esse causa secundum fieri. . . .

Et ideo quandocumque naturalis effectus est natus impressionis agentis recipere secundum eandem rationem secundum quam est in agente, tunc fieri effectus dependet ab agente, non autem esse ipsius. Sed aliquando effectus non est natus recipere impressionem agentis secundum eandem rationem secundum quam est in agente: sicut patet in omnibus agentibus quae non agunt simile secundum speciem. . . . Et tale agens potest esse causa formae secundum rationem talis formae et non

The *quinque viae* assign the proper cause of the effect in each case, because they assign the cause of the form as such of the effect, the cause *secundum esse* of the effect wherever it is found. This is apparent from a simple comparison of the terms of the process of each.

I. From movement beyond *moved* movers to a mover moved by none.
II. From subordinated, *caused* causes, to a *first* cause beyond all median causes, *uncaused* as a cause.
III. From the *possible* to a *necessary* which has no cause of its necessity in being, but is the cause of all other beings.
IV. From *graduated* perfections, limited perfections, to a *maximum,* the unlimited, cause of these perfections in all others.
V. From things which are *determined* and *directed,* in operating for an end, to an *intelligent governor.*

In each case the form of the effect as such is transcended in assigning a cause in which the same formality is not found, to which thus the causing of the form as such is proper.

That the proofs proceed from effects to proper causes of the form as such is also manifest in a further element: the exclusion of the possibility of an infinite regress in explaining the effects.[99] The repugnance of such a regress has its evidence on two scores: on the part of the effect itself as actually given, an experienced fact (*posito effectu*). To take away, for example, the unmoved mover would mean that the actual fact of movement must be denied, obviously an absurdity. To remove the first cause, would demand a denial of the order of causes which is the evidence from which the *secunda via* begins, and similarly in all the ways. Thus the evidence of the actual given facts witnesses the necessity of finding a first proper cause, a cause of the form as such of the effect.

On the part of the cause there can be no infinite series, not because of any numerical consideration, but because of the

solum secundum quod acquiritur in hac materia: et ideo est causa non solum fiendi sed essendi. *Ibid.*, q. 104, a. 1.

[99] The rejection of an infinite regress as the explanation of the fact involved, is explicit in the first three, implicit in the last two ways. Cf. Muniz, *Soma Teol.*, 139.

causality involved. Given the form of the effect, there must be a proper cause, one that by right has the power of causing the form as such of the effect. Whether there be one or a hundred causes *secundum fieri*, causes of the same level as the effect, is inconsequential; the series of such causes only repeats the demand for a proper cause, since they are, as having the same kind of form as the effect, of the same order as that from which the original need for explanation began. The form of movement is in the moved mover with the same urgency for explanation as it is in the merely mobile subject.[100] The cause to which belongs the causation of the form as such of the effect is the only adequate explanation. Thus it is the first cause, the one which is completely proportioned to the total explanation of the effect involved. From any effect its proper cause can be demonstrated to exist, since given the effect, its very dependence as effect demands the proper cause.

The process of each of the ways, developed along the resolutory lines of proper causality, is appropriate to the scientific character of metaphysics, and conducive to the successful conclusion of its quest to know its proper subject, as to its *propter quid*, in terms of perfect scientific knowledge.

c. As to their conclusions

Finally, the *quinque viae* in their conclusions exhibit a relevance and suitability to the attainment of the objective of metaphysics in its order of discovery. It is to be noted, first of all, that as the ways proceed from distinct points of inception, and adhere in their resolution to the lines of proper causality, their conclusions are formally distinct. That the starting points are distinct is apparent from the formalities involved in each. Movement is distinct from both being and operation, as imperfect act from perfect act. Being itself and operation, the areas of perfect act at issue respectively in the third and fourth, and in the second and fifth ways, are distinct. The two formalities, the very fact of efficiency (in the second way) and its

[100] Cf. *Summa Theol., loc. cit.*, q. 46, a. 2, ad 7.

finality (in the fifth way), are formally distinct. The fact of the possible status in existence involved in the third way is a formality diverse from the grades of perfections instituting the fourth way. Thus it is from five formally distinct aspects of reality that the ways proceed. Each follows rigidly the analysis of the aspect of limitation involved in its own starting point. Consequently, the conclusion in each case as the result of the process of resolution along the lines of proper causality affirms the proper cause of the effect formally involved. The direct, proper conclusions of the ways are, then, formally distinct.

At this point, the commentary of Cajetan, in the light of its continued influence upon the interpretation of the *quinque viae*, comes to mind. Speaking as commentator on the theological question, Cajetan states that in the *Summa* the article concerning God's existence has one conclusion, an affirmative response to the question: God exists.[101] Examining the philosophic content of the ways, however, he insists that in terms of the formalities involved, the conclusions affirm that certain predicates are found in reality, which as a matter of fact are proper to God. But the conclusions as such, from the philosophical premisses, are " not concerned with " establishing how such " predicates " are found existing.[102] The phrase *non curando* occurring throughout the discussion is Cajetan's emphasis upon the truth that the ways proceed according to the lines of proper causality; that their demonstrative force as such is limited to the conclusions warranted according to the exigencies of the effects formally involved. Cajetan is acutely aware of the importance of proper causality.[103] His comment has the force of pointing up what precisely is the result of the direct philosophic content of the ways. The strict, demonstrative

[101] Cf. Cajetan, *Comm.* in I, q. 2, a. 3, n. 2: In corpore est una conclusio responsiva quaesito affirmative.

[102] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 3: . . . afferri possunt ad concludendum quaedam praedicata inveniri in rerum natura, quae secundum veritatem sunt propria Dei . . . non curando quomodo vel qualiter sint.

[103] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 9: Non assignatur causa in communi sed particulari materiae de qua est sermo. Cf. also *Comm.* in I, q. 104, a. 1.

value of the ways would be exceeded if the conclusion "God as God exists" were to be alleged as the direct conclusion. This one conclusion of the article is rather an identification made in virtue of the theological context. What is strictly demonstrated is the proper cause in each case.[104]

As the ways function in metaphysics, their five proper conclusions afford to the metaphysician the ultimate explanation of the distinct aspects of limitation which the investigation of concrete reality has revealed. But even as these aspects of limitation are a manifestation of the radical composition of essence and existence, so also the five conclusions open the way to the discovery of the *propter quid*, the first cause of all being, *subsistent esse*. For the conclusions themselves lead to the necessity of further investigation. Since the conclusions attained affirm the actually existent causes of the effects involved, it is connatural to the metaphysician to examine such causes in terms of the proper formality of the science, *habens esse*. Such an inquiry leads to the unique, subsistent *esse*, which as such is the cause of all being.

This process embraces two general steps: the first is an exemination of the conclusions of the *quinque viae* in the light of the proper subject of the science, resulting in the realization that each cause is a being without limitation, subsistent *esse*; the second is the further conclusion that subsistent *esse* is necessarily unique. The elements of these two steps can be suggested as follows:

The First Step:

1. The first unmoved mover is subsistent *esse*. For as such, the first uncaused cause can in no way be caused. This would not be so if it were not subsistent *esse*, since then there would be a subject, a receptive, potential principle, of which *esse* would be the actuality.[105]

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[104] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 3: . . . et ideo, concludendo haec inveniri in rerum natura, concluditur directe, quasi per accidens, quod Deus est, idest, Deus, non ut Deus, sed ut habens talem conditionem, est: et consequenter ipsum substratum, scilicet Deus ut Deus est.

[105] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 3, a. 4; I *Cont. Gent.*, c. 22.

2. The first uncaused cause is subsistent *esse*. For as such, the first uncaused cause can in no way be caused. This would not be so if it were not subsistent *esse*, but there were a receptive principle of *esse*. For then *esse*, as not identified with essence, the subject, nor caused by the essential principles—an impossibility—must needs come from an extrinsic cause.[106]

3. The *per se* necessary being, cause of others, is subsistent being. For that which *is* not *per se*, is not its own *esse*, by the same token is not *per se* necessary, but rather if it is necessary at all, has another as the cause of its necessity.[107]

4. The maximum being is subsistent *esse*, for as the cause it is the explanation of those perfections which are limited precisely because of their potential, receptive subject. The cause, the maximum, is as such subsistent *esse*, and thus the cause of *esse*, goodness, etc., in all others.[108]

5. The intelligent being, governor, must be subsistent *esse*. For as such, as supreme intelligence, it is supreme in actuality. Further, this governor is not any sort of intelligent, directing cause, but a cause of whatever seeks to gain an end. Such a cause must be self-sufficient in perfection, in actuality, in *esse*, since the things which act to *gain* an end, do so because of limitation in their substantial perfection. The cause directive of all can evidence no such limitation.

The Second Step:

The second step in the procedure consists in the realization that subsistent *esse* is necessarily unique. For the perfection of *esse* itself, even from the beginning of the science, is apprehended as perfection, as actuality. The apprehension of subsistent *esse* as unique is suggested by this argument of St. Thomas:

> Again, absolutely infinite being cannot be twofold, for being that is absolutely infinite comprises every perfection of being; hence if infinity were present in two such things, in no respect would they be found to differ. Now, subsisting being must be infinite, because it is not terminated in some recipient. Therefore, there cannot be a subsisting being besides the first.[109]

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[106] Cf. *ibid.* [107] Cf. I *Cont. Gent., loc. cit.*

[108] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 44, a. 1: Si enim aliquid invenitur in aliquo per participationem, necesse est quod causetur in ipso ab eo cui essentialiter convenit.

[109] Impossibile est quod sit duplex esse omnino infinitum: esse enim quod omnino

From these suggested continuations of the process of metaphysics, based upon St. Thomas' procedures in the investigations subsequent to the question of God's existence in theology, the relevance of the conclusions of the proofs in metaphysics is apparent. Since the conclusions themselves emerge from a mode of investigation perfectly in accord with the discovery and process of metaphysics, they fall properly within the competence of the science. As the investigation continues, it is in the light of the proper subject's formal aspect, *habens esse*. In terms of the fact that the conclusions arrived at are proper causes of the aspects of limitation discovered, they are recognied as necessarily implying subsistent *esse*. This is simply an affirmation of the perfection of such causes, with the denial of the limitation of a receptive subject. It remains a knowledge within the proper range of metaphysics. For if the subsistent *esse* is discovered to be unique, and to be " positively separated " from matter and potentiality, this recognition is reached in terms of the investigation of the proper subject of the science. As the subsistent *esse* is recognized to be the unique first cause of being, it is ever considered, not as subject, but as principle of the subject of the science.

Employed within the context of metaphysics' order of discovery, in its investigation of its proper subject, the *quinque viae* in their starting points, in their processes, and in their conclusions are eminently relevant. Through them a subsisting being is discovered. Since the discovery is the result of the causal investigation of aspects of limitation, and since the value or significance of " subsisting being " as so discovered is totally derived through the proper subject of the science, the proportion of metaphysics to the truth attained is preserved.[110] The

est infinitum omnem perfectionem essendi comprehendit; et sic, si duobus talis adesset infinitas, non invenitur quo unum ab altero differet. Esse autem subsistens oportet esse infinitum: quia non terminatur aliquo recipiente. Impossibile est igitur esse aliquod esse subsistens praeter primum. II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 52.

[110] On the positive and absolute value of the knowledge gained concerning even positively separated, unlimited being, by reason of the value of the proper subject of the science. Cf. Part Two, pp. 276-278.

nature of metaphysics is respected, and the final achievement of its objective, science concerning its proper subject, is placed within its grasp.

From the knowledge of subsisting being derived through the *quinque viae*, the necessary dependence of all being upon the first cause can be attained *a priori*. Thus the intrinsic, structural composition of all being in terms of essence and *esse* really distinct can be demonstrated.[111] The actual dependence of all being in its production, conservation, and perfective development in the dynamic order, will also be discovered. The completion of such an investigation is the work of the whole of natural theology. It is simply the development of the implications of the *propter quid* of being as it is dependent upon the first cause, with all the necessary " properties " to be attributed to it in terms of such dependence. To such a knowledge of being the *quinque viae* open the way. Employed in terms of their relevance to metaphysics, they will lead it along a line of consideration that keeps being as the subject, that considers subsistent being, God, exclusively as principle of this subject.

B. Judgment of the Interpretations of Certain Contemporary Thomists

The evaluation of the development of the actual question of God's existence as presented by the Thomistic authors considered consists in pointing out the influence of their precon-

[111] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 44, a. 1. The fundamental element in metaphysics actual apprehension of the dependence of its subject upon the first cause is expressed in this article of St. Thomas: In terms such as those he employs, metaphysics' will perfect its actual knowledge of the *propter quid* of its subject as limited and dependent.

. . . Si enim aliquid invenitur in aliquo per participationem, necesse est quod causetur in ipso ab eo cui essentialiter convenit. . . .

. . . Deus est ipsum esse per se subsistens. . . .

. . . esse subsistens non potest esse nisi unum.

Relinquitur ergo quod omnia alia a Deo non sint suum esse, sed participant esse.

Necesse est igitur omnia quae diversificantur secundum diversam participationem essendi ut sint perfectius vel minus perfecte, causari ab uno primo ente quod perfectissime est.

ceptions concerning the nature of this question in metaphysics upon their interpretations of the *quinque viae*. Such interpretations are profoundly determined by the various ways in which the question: does God exist? is formally proposed as a scientific question to be solved by metaphysics.

1. The manualists

In keeping with his conception of the place of God in metaphysics, Father Gredt proposes the formal question *an sit Deus*. In connection with the nominal definition of God, necessary in this procedure, there arises from the use of the *quinque viae* an awkward point. Judging the ways to be formally distinct, he equates the cause discovered in each with "being *a se*," the nominal definition of God, and thus establishes the thesis: God exists. But immediately he asserts that this does not mean that the one God exists; the unicity of God is a subsequent question.[112] In this qualification, the influence of Cajetan's commentary is obvious. Yet the body of doctrine thereafter is concerned with God as with one subject, following the order of the *Summa Theologiae*, until the unicity of God, last among the entitative attributes, is considered.[113] In such a process, either the unicity is really presupposed before it is established, which is bad philosophy, or a plurality of subjects is considered under one name "God," which is confusing.

Certainly neither Cajetan nor St. Thomas intended that a similar state of suspension was involved from questions two up to eleven in the *Summa*. The one God, subject of the science, is the subject both of the question concerned with demonstrating His existence and of those concerned with demonstrating that certain attributes, among them unicity, belong to *Him*. Precisely because God is the given subject of theology, there is no possibility of imagining that, until the unicity of God is demonstrated, there might perhaps be a plurality of "Gods" involved.[114] What Cajetan excludes is the presumption that

[112] Cf. Gredt, *op. cit.*, II, n. 789, 194.
[113] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 812, 223.
[114] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 3, prol.

the philosophic content of the *quinque viae* as such establishes the attribute of unicity. In seeking to utilize a remark which does guarantee the formal procedure involved in each of the ways, Father Gredt is led into a philosophically ambiguous position, because he has sought to deal formally with God as scientific subject, and with the scientific question: *an sit Deus*. The privileged place of theology is not given to metaphysics, to warrant a presumption that God is involved in all questions prior to that of the unicity; fidelity to the evidence and premisses of the *quinque viae* precludes an assumption of the unicity as immediately established by their conclusions.

In keeping with his position of the question of God in metaphysics, Father Maquart points out, after the development of the *quinque viae*, how, in a kind of de facto manner, the question of God's existence is solved. The causes discovered univocally merit the name God; but the unicity of God is not established. But like Father Gredt, he holds that the one God is the subject of the questions prior to that of the unicity.

Both authors in their restrictions concerning the question of the unicity of God are protecting themselves from the charge that more is advanced in the conclusions of the *quinquae viae* than their processes, when followed strictly, justify. Actually it is a preconception that the question *an sit Deus* is formally involved in metaphysics, and the anticipation of knowledge concerning God's nature that both necessitate the restrictions and lead to the difficulty pointed out. If the *quinque viae* are used with fidelity to their process, they cannot but lead to such difficulties whenever the preconceptions indicated are also operative. The function of the *quinque viae* suggested by the positive judgment given above avoids any problem about God's unicity. Such a process allows metaphysics to take its natural course by keeping the proper subject of the science as its focal point. Eventually it does reach, in such terms, the unique subsistent *esse*. There is no problem with the five formally distinct ways, since there is no presumption of an obligation to establish the oneness of God. Rather, in terms of metaphysics' own

competence and point of view, aspects of limitation are properly resolved. The connatural protraction of this process itself leads to the subsisting being who is as such unique. Into such a process there is no need to introduce a difficulty which is extraneous to it, nor a solution which is as unsatisfactory as that of the authors indicated.

2. Authors of special studies

The preconceptions governing the interpretations of the *quinque viae* in the works of Canon Van Steenberghen and of Gilsonian authors amount to presenting formally to metaphysics the question: *an sit Deus*. The resultant interpretations of the *quinque viae* manifest details which need to be recognized.

a. Canon Van Steenberghen

The formulation of the nominal definition " provident creator of the universe " as the key to the scientific question of God's existence, the solution of the human and religious problem of God, indicates the preconception of this author. It is this which regulates his development of the question of God's existence and his dismissal of the *quinque viae*. The present rejection of this author's position is based upon the principles regulative of metaphysics' attainment of this truth. What has been indicated concerning metaphysics' development of this question is founded upon the unchanging and unchangeable terms in which, as a human science, perfective of a human intellect, metaphysics can and should reach its objective. St. Thomas' teaching and its ramifications guarantee a metaphysical approach to the problem of God; one that is genuine, true to itself. Thus can it best serve any further apologetic ends of the philosopher.

The rejection of the *quinque viae* by the Canon is totally reducible to this: they do not prove the provident creator of the universe; therefore they are not genuine metaphysical proofs. With the antecedent, agreement is emphatic. Not even the *quarta via*, for which the author has some kind words,

reaches what he demands. But his attempt to establish the consequent, the rejection based upon his own questionable preconception, is dubious. The only effective reason for this rejection is the preconception itself; his actual criticisms of the *quinque viae* are strained and flimsy.

The classification of the ways, saving the fourth, as "cosmological," signifiying their lack of the metaphysical import claimed for his own genuine metaphysical proof, is quite arbitrary. They can be called "cosmological" in the sense once employed by many authors to distinguish them from any argument based upon the universal consent of men, and indicating their basis in the things of the world. But that they are authentically metaphysical in their philosophical content, process, and also in their function in metaphysics has already been sufficiently indicated. That they cannot be prolonged to discover the formalities involved in the Canon's own "provident creator of the universe" is an arbitrary reason for dismissal, refuted by what St. Thomas has already done in the *Summa*.

What the author has actually done has been to read into the *Summa* his own conception of the philosophical problem of God, and to interpret the procedure of St. Thomas accordingly. He alleges that to reach God, i. e., the provident creator of the universe, involves the whole process of questions three to eleven, and that even then an addition would be required, a deduction that all finite beings are changeable and that the infinite, unique being is unchangeable, first mover. This is an evident distortion of the formal point of view and content of these questions. Theology does not have to wait until question eleven to be aware that it is concerned with the one God. The objective of these questions is theological, the manifestation of *how* what is said of God is true. As St. Thomas indicates in the prologue of question three, it is properly a matter of *quomodo non sit Deus*. Theology proposes questions concerning God which arise either from revelation itself, or from purely human sources, whether these be a logical dialectic, common opinion, theological traditions, errors, attacks upon the truth.

It resolves such questions in terms of their proper mode of knowability. Thus in dealing with the entitative attributes of God, subject of the science, St. Thomas proposes certain conditions of finite being, which have been attributed to God by one source or other, and with the predicates discovered through the *quinque viae* as media, *demonstrates* the truth concerning its reference of these conditions to God. This is, in particular, what is involved in the matter of God's unicity. Whatever be said for or against the Canon's own conception of the philosophical problem of God, to make it the norm for evaluating the *Summa Theologiae,* is a mistaken projection which presumes that this problem is involved in the *Summa.* The criticisms based on this projection, ignore the very words of the *Summa* and its theological character.

As for the particulars of his rejection of the philosophic validity of the *quinque viae,* it must be said, first, that his charges are not justified. He says, for example, that the first two of the ways not only do not reach the provident creator of the universe, but that they do not even validly establish their own conclusions. An analysis of finite being as such would be necessary to reach the unmoved mover, or the first cause. In the light of the metaphysical significance of the formalities involved and of the character of the process of resolution in terms of proper causality, however, any movement as such, any hierarchy of subordinated causes as such, is sufficient to warrant the absolute character of the conclusions reached. Movement as such demands an absolutely unmoved mover, whether or not there be a multitude of moved movers; subordinated agents as such demand a first, an uncaused cause, whether or not the subordinated causes be few or many. It is the cause of the form as such of the effect that demands explanation, and an explanation that is satisfactory to metaphysics' absolute point of view.

The *quinque viae* in their function in metaphysics, and interpreted according to this function, permit the science to ascend to its objective. An extensive study of the finite is not particularly urgent; rather the intensive and absolute view of reality

as permitted by the proper subject of the science and its realizations in given experience, leads to the resolution of all reality into a simple truth through which many things are known in terms of the ultimate cause.[115] The *quinque viae* institute this resolution by setting out the aspects of limitation discovered in immediate experience. They respect the gradually perfectible character of the human intellect in its process of discovery. The Canon's own proof is nothing but a generalized formula, which expresses the necessary investigation of the same ground, static and dynamic, from which the *quinque viae* more concretely set out.

Further, the author's criticisms are rather flimsy. In connection with the fourth and fifth of the ways, he simply quibbles about the examples employed. Obviously neither derives its validity from the examples.

More serious is his charge against the *quarta via*. He claims that it is a " metaphysical proof " because ostensibly it reaches the provident creator of the universe. But its procedure is questionable because of the principles of causality employed. Yet his own attack upon this principle does not even repeat the principle as St. Thomas phrased it. The formulation of the principle, nevertheless, is of some importance, especially in the light of what the Canon himself concedes, that it is valid only concerning absolutely simple perfections. For this is exactly the point involved in the proof, as is clear from the very letter of its content. Admittedly it is a difficult proof, because such perfections can be fully appreciated only by metaphysics. The principle of causality may not be immediately evident to the man on the street, in the sense that it would be immediately grasped. But it is evident once its terms are plumbed, which of course is a metaphysical task, and one that demands respect for the careful " propriety of words " typical of St. Thomas. Its evidence does not, as is charged, depend upon the presupposition of the existence of what is to be proved. Rather it depends upon an understanding of the metaphysical implications of diverse subjects diversely sharing some perfection. The

[115] Cf. *In De Trin.*, q. 5, a. 4; q. 6, a. 1, *ad tertiam quaest.*

text cited by the author himself [116] shows St. Thomas' understanding of the proof, and indicates that the formulation of this principle is not haphazard. Of the other principle in the process, (*Quod autem dicitur maxime tale in aliquo genere est causa omnium quae sunt illius generis*), the Canon says that it is to be understood only in certain conditions. But why deny that St. Thomas used such a principle because in fact such conditions were the point at issue?

Again, such a denial is based upon the author's preconception. By it he is almost forced to reject the *quinque viae*, and then to find bases for this rejection. In spite of this rejection, the *quinque viae* rightly understood and rightly employed serve well in metaphysics' development. What is of value in his criticisms is that his own dissatisfaction with them for his own purposes suggests that in no condition should they be transferred bodily from their theological setting into philosophy. Rather they are to be employed with due regard to the nature, process and objective of metaphysics. So employed they are pertinent and appropriate to the science: to the order of discovery, to the task of suggesting and of resolving the causal explanation of the proper subject, as they lead to the discovery of the principle of that subject, *ipsum esse subsistens*, which is of course God.

b. The Gilsonian School *

Although each of them affirms the integration of natural theology with the one science of metaphysics, M. Gilson, Fathers Owens and Smith nevertheless set out formally to establish the existence of God, and indeed, of the Christian God, subsistent being, and Creator, as the immediate conclusion of the *quinque viae*. Gilson does so, it may be said, on principle; the others, obviously sharing in his preconception, do so in fact. Gilson and Father Owens simply affirm that the conclusion reached by the *quinque viae* is the *ipsum esse subsistens*; Father Smith, in

[116] Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 5.

* (Editor's Note) The review article by Germain G. Grisez offers an expanded criticism of Gilson's *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (p. 448).

keeping with the systematic nature of his work, employs the apparatus of the nominal definition of God, "cause of the existence of things" to show this.

The first thing to point out here is their preconception, since it is essential to the evaluation of the interpretations, varying only verbally, given by them to the *quinque viae*. It is a preconception expressed by Gilson's statement that in Christian philosophy anyone who sets out to prove God's existence thereby undertakes the task of proving the Creator's existence; that every proof necessarily includes creation. This is in fact the presumption of all three authors. As part of the general historical and doctrinal thesis of Gilson, this position has already been discussed.

Before descending to the details of the interpretation of the proofs drawn from this presupposition, merely a brief remark about the preconception itself is needed. The principles governing metaphysics' consideration of God would seem to demand a process of discovery which precludes this position, and to indicate as the objective of metaphysics a scientific question dealing formally, not with God, but with its proper subject. Undoubtedly, the process utilizing the *quinque viae* will finally reach the *ipsum esse subsistens* as the first cause of all being; just as surely, the assistance of revelation plays an important part in channelling the interests of metaphysics. But the process itself must remain faithful to its own point of view and its own competence. If this is done, the *quinque viae* can serve well in the order of discovery, and can be followed according to their own intrinsic character i. e., as processes from the discovered aspects of limitation to the explanation through the proper causes which are demanded. Under the Gilsonian presupposition, however, this is not possible.

To descend to the particulars in the interpretation of the *quinque viae* resulting from the indicated presupposition is to examine the use of the thought of St. Thomas and even to dispute over texts. Such an effort is not futile, however, since a startling influence of the preconception upon the use

of the ways clearly emerges. It serves to emphasize the importance of respecting metaphysics' proper proportion to the consideration of the question of God's existence.

An ambiguous position is immediately seen in M. Gilson's discussion of the ways. He does interpret them as distinct, insisting upon the proper causality involved; yet he seeks to establish simultaneously that their immediate conclusion is the "I am Who am" of Exodus. To do so he advances several texts of St. Thomas, already cited, in support.[117] By such texts, the author seeks to show that in the first two ways the production of *esse* as such is involved, and that therefore the conclusion is to *esse subsistens* as the proper cause of *esse*.

But it is apparent from the texts that the full import of God's causality of *esse* as such is not involved at all. The chapter of the *Contra Gentes* cited simply seeks to establish in a general manner that God is *a* principle of the being of things. He is an efficient cause; but any efficient cause brings its effects into being; therefore so does God. He is first mover of the heavens; they are involved in the production of things into being; therefore so is God. St. Thomas gradually deduces the truth of God's proper causality of being as such according to the process of the human mind, until in chapter fifteen this proper causality is formally established. Subsequently, in chapter sixteen, he show that God is properly the *Creator*. M. Gilson remarks that to be the cause of the effects of the motion of the heavens, is to be the cause of the existence of that motion, may be quite true; but it is not the meaning of the text he cites in support of his own attempt to make the *prima via* serve his purpose.

The author relies heavily upon the fact that St. Thomas uses the conclusions of the *quinque viae*, the first and second especially, in order to prove creation. From this one is to draw the inference that creation is therefore to be understood as involved in the ways leading to such conclusions. The use by St. Thomas

[117] Cf. Part One, p. 76, n. 308. The texts of II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 6 should be compared with those of II *Cont. Gent.*, cc. 15, 16.

is unquestionable; the inference is another matter. The very fact that St. Thomas uses the conclusions as *middle terms* to demonstrate that God is the cause of all being and that He is the creator, indicates that these further truths are not the *immediate* and proper conclusions of the *quinque viae*. Further truths concerning God and His causality are *virtually* contained in the conclusions of the ways, but not actually so. While in God there is supreme simplicity of perfection, one does not presuppose such truths nor indeed ignore the sole evidence, the exigencies of effects, in interpreting and developing the ways. The familiar meaning of the virtual minor distinction among the divine attributes and aspects of divine causality, is that each of them bespeaks an objective formality to the human mind. By the same token, one truth discovered concerning God serves St. Thomas as a true middle term in the demonstration of other truths. The procedure of M. Gilson would seem to cut across all such distinctions and to remove the demonstrative value of the texts he employs.

The author also uses the terms *creation* and creator in a way foreign to St. Thomas' own usage, saying, for example, that God is the cause of movement as the creator of movement. Movement, first of all, is not properly created, since it is not capable of existing in itself, but concreated.[118] Creation, in addition, is always described by St. Thomas as the mode of production of things from nothingness, and it refers properly to the first production of things by God.[119] The activity of God is regard to secondary causality or any act of already existing things is called by St. Thomas *motio* or *mutatio*.[120]

While this may seem to be just a matter of " splitting texts," it is in fact an indication of the author's preconception leading him to take liberties with the thought of St. Thomas in order to seek support. M. Gilson expresses his fundamental point in

[118] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 45, a. 4 : Creari est quoddam fieri. . . . Fieri autem ordinatur ad esse rei. Unde illis proprie convenit fieri et creari, quibus convenit esse. Quod quidem convenit proprie subsistentibus. . . .

[119] Cf. *ibid.*, also a. 1; a. 2, ad 1.

[120] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 103, a. 4.

his citation from the *Compendium Theologiae*, chapter 68.[121] Dealing with God's proper causality, this teaching of St. Thomas is of paramount importance. But to use it as the basis for presenting what St. Thomas intends in the process of the *quinque viae* is inadmissible. There can be no doubt that *ontologically* the proper causality of God, the truth that His proper effect is *esse*, is the reason for the universality of His causality, and for the dependence of all other efficient causality upon His. There can be no doubt that the reasons for the diverse aspects of limitation and dependence utilized by the *quinque viae* arise because everything receives *esse*, the actuality of all acts, and is thus permeated with ontological composition, with limitation and dependence entitatively and operatively. Finally there can be no doubt that the diverse aspects of divine causality are not to be considered as so diversified on the part of God Himself, whose operation is identical with His utterly simple being. The proper effect, *esse*, is attained by Him not as though it were something added as a final finishing touch to the work of other causes. Rather in producing *esse*, God is " mover "; " agent "; " cause of the necessity of others "; first intelligence, directing things to their ends."

All these are truths; but they are truths that can be discovered by metaphysics only on its own grounds. At the point

[121] Cf. *Compendium Theologiae*, c. 68: . . . Primus autem effectus Dei in rebus est ipsum esse, quod omnes alii effectus praesupponunt, et supra quod fundantur. Necesse est autem omne quod aliquo modo est a Deo esse. In omnibus autem ordinatis hoc communiter inventur, quod id quod est primum et perfectissimum in aliquo ordine, est causa eorum quae sunt post in ordine illo; . . . Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus est primum et perfectissimum ens: unde oportet quod sit causa essendi omnibus quae esse habent.

Adhuc. Omne quod habet aliquid per participationem reducitur in id quod habet illud per essentiam, sicut in principium et causam. . . . Ostensum est autem supra, quod Deus est ipsum suum esse; unde esse ei convenit per suam essentiam; omnibus autem aliis convenit per participationem: non enim alicuius alterius essentia est suum esse, quia esse absolutum et per se subsistens non potest esse nisi unum. . . . Igitur oportet Deum esse causam existendi omnibus quae sunt.

Thus both these proofs proceed from reason prior ontologically, namely, about God as most perfect, subsistent being. Such truths have first, however, to be discovered.

of its use of the *quinque viae*, metaphysics is restricted to the evidence of limitation and thus of dependence which it has discovered. Its resolution of such effects is governed solely by the form of the effect itself, through which it must develop its knowledge of what sort of cause explains such an effect. At the termination of the ways, the metaphysician has an explanation of the effects through their proper causes, the causes *secundum esse*, as this signifies the cause of the form as such of the effect. Certainly the metaphysician is led further; he does reach the unique subsistent being whose proper effect is *esse*, because the *quinque viae* set him upon the ontological lines which lead there. But he cannot anticipate the significance of *ipsum esse subsistens* in developing the *quinque viae*. Nor does St. Thomas do so even in their theological context. The metaphysician who follows the *quinque viae* according to their properly metaphysical function and content, will eventually and properly return along the same route, now considered from the point of view of knowledge *discovered* concerning the first cause, the subsistent being, who is God.

The agreement of Fathers Owens and Smith with the preconception of Gilson is accompanied by a similar share of its influence upon their interpretations of the *quinque viae*. In order to reach the subsistent *esse*, cause of the existence of things, the one conclusion of all the ways, the proofs themselves must revolve about *esse* as the effect to be explained. Thus both authors in fact remove the formal distinction among the ways, and among their conclusions. While St. Thomas states that the ways proceed *ex parte motus*; *ex ratione causae efficientis*, etc., Father Owens sees the first way as dealing with the "existential act of sensible motion"; the second with substantial change as the production of *esse*. Father Smith discovers the more profound problem of the ways to be the "subject-existing-as-moving," "the subject-existing-as-causing," etc. In both authors, then, the formal point of view of each of the proofs is bypassed and the act of existence is brought to the fore.

The search for support for this interpretation leads also to misappropriation of the words and teaching of St. Thomas. Father Owens thus cites a text from the *Commentary on the Metaphysics* which is simply irrelevant to his own position.[122]

In his use of St. Thomas' distinction between the *causa secundum fieri* and the *causa non solum fiendi sed etiam essendi*, Father Smith ignores St. Thomas' own explanation of the distinction in terms of the form of the effect, as the key to the discovery of its cause and the degree of its dependence. Father Smith's interpretation is rather guided by the "form of the cause," God as *esse subsistens*, the desired conclusion, in view of which the effects involved in the ways are to be reappraised in terms of *esse*. Even in the theological context in which he explains this distinction, however, St. Thomas allows the form of the effect to be the key to the discovery of its cause and the degree of dependence upon this cause. In the order of discovery the effect alone is available to metaphysics. Because metaphysics discovers that the form as such of the effects involved in the *quinque viae* demands a cause, in terms of that form the quest for the cause is imposed and guided. Ultimately that quest must transcend the form of the effect, since it is that very form which evinces dependence and the need for a cause. Thus beyond any univocal cause, there must be an equivocal cause, which as such is the cause *secundum esse* of the effect, insofar as it is the cause of the form as such wherever it is found, whether in the original effect or in any univocal cause.[123] The employment of this distinction of St. Thomas in the order of discovery alone, would have obviated the specious problem of "extricating God from the categories"; it would have preserved St. Thomas' sense of the distinction as well as the formal, metaphysical resolution proper to each of the ways.

The claim by both authors of support for their interpretation of the ways in subsequent use of the conclusions by St. Thomas is similarly unconvincing. Thus in the text from the *De Po-*

[122] Cf. above note 69, from IX *Met.*, lect. 3, nn. 1805-1806; also III *Cont. Gent.*, c. 66.

[123] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 104, a. 1; q. 13, a. 5, ad 1.

tentia cited by Father Owens, St. Thomas himself states that that God is subsistent *esse* is proved (*probatur*) by reason of His being the unmoved mover; the same thing is said in the text cited from the *Compendium Theologiae*.[124] In simple rules of logic, the formalities involved must be distinct in order that there be a proof with sufficient terms. Again, the real identity of all perfections in God cannot be read into a causal investigation which is totally dependent upon the formality of the effect involved. Father Smith relies upon the text of the *quinque viae* in the *Summa*, seeing St. Thomas' statement " this all understand to be God," to be indicative both of the necessity and the justification of the " existential " interpretation. The theological context of the question of God's existence is itself the reason for such a step by St. Thomas, and vindicates the identification. But metaphysics ought not to be formally concerned with proving God's existence as such. Nor is it within the competence of the science to use knowledge about God's own being and causality as the index for interpreting both the conclusion and, retroactively, the processes of the *quinque viae*.

A more basic issue, however, resultant from the preconception of these authors, must be faced. The key to their interpretations is the emphasis upon the " existential act " as the real focal point of the ways. This common emphasis can be seen in connection with the first of the ways, as Father Owens speaks of the " existential act of sensible motion " and Father Smith extricates God from the categories as the cause of the " subject-existing-as-moving."

There is need, first of all, to point out the distinction often and explicitly made by St. Thomas between *motus* and *esse*. Thus, for example, he says: ". . . though motion may occur for any existing thing, motion is apart from the being (*esse*) of the thing." [125]

[124] Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 5, *tertia ratio; Compendium Theologiae*, cc. 3; 6; 11.

[125] Licet alicui existenti accidit motus, tamen motus est praeter esse rei. III *Cont. Gent.*, c. 65. This text itself shows St. Thomas using the precise sense of God's proper causality of *esse* from the point of view of what God is in Himself. Cf. also IX *Met.*, *loc. cit.*; *Q. D. de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 11, on the distinction between *esse* and *operari*.

In speaking of causality, St. Thomas similarly distinguishes the cause of *motus* from the cause of *esse*. " The movable does not owe its being to its mover, but only its movement. . . . ". . . the movable does not depend on the mover for its being, but only for its being moved." [126]

With regard to the divine causality, in itself utterly simple, St. Thomas preserves the formalities of its diverse effects.[127] In an indication, of diverse aspects of dependence upon divine causality from the ontologically prior point of view, he shows that every secondary agent depends upon God, on the part of its operative form which He gives and conserves; on the part of its end, as He is the source of all goodness; on the part of the actual efficiency, as He is the first mover applying the agent to act, and the proper cause of *esse*, bestowing the ultimate complement to all other efficiency as it attains *esse*.[128]

When such formalities are eliminated, confusion is inevitable; this is the case when the *prima via* is viewed as dealing with *esse* to establish the subsistent *esse* as its cause. This is the apparent intent of both Father Owens and Father Smith, resulting from their preconception. In the prosecution of their analysis, certain fundamentals, indicated in the following statement of St. Thomas, have been obliterated:

In another way, *esse* bespeaks the act, of a being insofar as it is a being, that is, that by which something is denominated an actual being in reality. And in this sense, *esse* is attributed solely to those things which are contained in the ten genera; . . .

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[126] Mobile non habet esse per suum motorem sed solummodo motum. . . . non dependet mobile a motore secundum esse, sed secundum moveri tantum. II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 57.

[127] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 14, a. 6: . . . quidquid perfectionis est in quacumque creatura, totum praeexistit et continetur in Deo secundum modum excellentem. Non autem solum id in quo creaturae communicant, scilicet ipsum esse, ad perfectionem pertinet sed etiam ea per quae creaturae ad invicem distinguuntur, sicut vivere et intelligere, et huiusmodi, quibus viventia a non viventibus et intelligentia a non intelligentibus distinguuntur. Et omnis forma per quam quaelibet res in propria specie constituitur perfectio quaedam est. Et sic omnia in Deo praeexistunt, non solum quantum ad id quod commune est omnibus, sed etiam quantum ad ea secundum quae res distinguuntur.

[128] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 105, a. 4; *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7; II *Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4.

But this *esse* is attributed to something in two ways: In one way as to that which truly and properly has *esse,* or is. And in this sense it is attributed solely to substance as *per se* subsisting: whence that which truly is, is said to be a substance. . . . But all things which do not subsist *per se* but in another and with another, whether they be accidents or substantial forms or any sort of parts, do not have *esse* in the sense that they truly exist, but *esse* is attributed to them in another way that is as to that by which (*quo*) something exists; as whiteness is said *to be* not because it subsists in itself, but because by reason of it something has existence as white (*habet esse album*).

Esse therefore is attributed truly and properly solely to a thing *per se* subsisting. But to such a thing, a twofold *esse* is attributed: There is one *esse* which results from those things from which its unity is integrated, and which properly is the substantial *esse* of the supposit. Another *esse* is attributed to the supposit besides those things which integrate it; this is an *esse* which is superadded, namely accidental *esse*, as to be white (*esse album*) is attributed to Socrates when one says "Socrates is white." [129]

With regard to the implications of this statement as applicable to the interpretation of the *quinque viae*, it is clear that their five starting points involve a certain ontological integration of actuality with subject. The third and fourth are con-

[129] *Alio modo, esse* dicitur actus entis in quantum est ens, idest quo denominatur aliquid ens actu in rerum natura. Et sic *esse* non attribuitur nisi rebus quae in decem generibus continentur; unde ens a tali esse dictum per decem genera dividitur.

Sed hoc esse attribuitur alicui *dupliciter.*

Uno modo (ut) sicut ei *quod* proprie et vere habet *esse* vel est. Et sic attribuitur soli substantiae *per se* subsistenti: unde quod vere est dicitur substantia. . . . Omnia vero quae non *per se subsistunt*, sed in alio et cum alio, sive sint accidentia, sive formae substantiales aut quaelibet partes, non habent *esse* ita ut ipsa vere sint, sed attribuitur eis esse *alio modo*, idest ut *quo* aliquid est; sicut albedo dicitur esse, non quia ipsa in se subsistat, sed quia ea aliquid habet esse album.

Esse ergo proprie et vere non attribuitur nisi rei *per se* subsistenti. Huic autem attribuitur *esse* duplex: *Unum* scilicet esse resultans ex his ex quibus eius unitas integratur, quod proprium est esse suppositi *substantiale. Aliud* esse est supposito attributum praeter ea quae integrant ipsum. Quod est esse superadditum, scilicet *accidentale*; ut esse album attribuitur Socrati, cum dicitur: Sacrates est albus. *Quodl.*, IX, q. 2, a. 2: ed. Marietti, 180; cf. *Summa Theol.*, q. 45, a. 4; q. 90, a. 2; III, q. 17, a. 2; II *Cont. Gent.*, c. 23; *In Met.* IV, lect. 1, nn. 539-543; VII, lect. 1, n. 1259; XII, lect. 1, nn. 2419-2420; *De Ente et Essentia*, c. 7; III *Sent.*, d. 6, q. 2, a. 2; *Q. D. de Unione Verbi Incarnati*, a. 4.

cerned directly with the *esse* as the substantial actuality of the subject. The first, and the second and fifth ways are concerned with actualities other than this *esse*. It is important to set these starting points against the background of St. Thomas' teaching concerning the ontological integration verified in the beings of experience.

That which *is*, to which substantial, existential act belongs, by which it is exercised as simply and primarily a being, is the subsistent subject. Whatever pertains to the essential constitution of that subject also actually is by reason of this substantial *esse*.[130] Whenever this *esse* is really distinct from the subject, it is the ultimate actuality in the substantial order by which the subject *is*, simply speaking. Being in which this real distinction is verified evidences, then, a real integration and composition in the order of substantial actuality; the essence is as potency to its existential act, *esse*. Obviously in the beings of experience this composition is always verified, since, as metaphysics eventually discovers, there is but one subsistent *esse*. Thus a being simply, *ens simpliciter*, indicates a subject actual by reason of its existential act.

Such existential act is neither the starting point nor the formality involved in the first way (nor in the second or fifth). Rather the subject is clearly given as an existent subject, since *moveri non attribuitur nisi existentibus* (similarly *unumquodque agit secundum quod est ens actu*).[131] What the starting point of the first of the ways involves as its problem is another " actuality " verified of existent subjects, the actuality of movement. Like other actualities, movement is to be viewed as a certain *esse accidentale* exercised by and integrated with the subject. The ultimate significance of such an integration lies in this, that simply in virtue of its existential act as really distinct, the subject does not exercise the total actuality either belonging to it properly by reason of its nature or adventitiously accruing to it. This, of course, is the basis for the truth involved in the aphoristic *ens simpliciter est bonum secundum*

[130] Cf. *De Unione Verbi Incarnati, loc. cit.*
[131] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 8, a. 5.

quid; ens secundum quid est bonum simpliciter.[132] Thus, generally, with regard to the nine predicamental accidents, by reason of which substance " is in a certain way," [133] there is involved the composition between the subject and an accidental form by reason of which the subject exercises an accidental *esse*, that is, an actuality by which it is in a certain way.[134]

Within the ontological integration of an existent subject, then, these elements are really distinct from each other: the subsistent thing and its existential act, its substantial *esse*; the subsistent thing and its accidents; the subsistent thing and the accidental *esse*, the actuality exercised by reason of such accidents; the accidents themselves as forms and the accidental *esse* exercised accordingly by their subject.

Clearly the *prima via* is not concerned with the existential act by which the subject *is*, simply speaking. Yet Father Owens seems at times to be speaking of this; Father Smith seems ultimately to make the transition from " subject-existing-as-moving " to simply " subject existing: cause of existence." It is hazardous to seek to isolate *esse* and to ignore the fundamental distinctions necessary for intelligibility.[135] Against the background indicated, the *motus* which is the issue in the *prima via* can be thus viewed: by reason of it, the existent subject is exercising a certain *esse accidentale*, it *is* in a certain way. The explanation of such an actuality proceeds according to the " definition " of *motus*, in the sense that only through the formality of *motus* is this actuality belonging to the subject either distinct from others, or even an indication of the very problem involved in the proof.

Of any actuality exercised by the subject, this much is true:

[132] Cf. *ibid.*, I, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1.

[133] Cf. *De Ver.*, q. 27, a. 1, ad 8.

[134] Cf. I *Cont. Gent.*, c. 23: Omne subiectum accidentis comparatur ad illud sicut potentia ad actum, eo quod accidens quaedam forma est, faciens esse actu secundum esse accidentale. . . . Also *In XII Met., loc. cit.*

[135] Cf. Cajetan, *Comm.* in I, q. 7, a. 1, n. 10:

> Esse secundum se perfectionem quamdam dicit: sed non potest imaginari quantam perfectionem dicat nisi alicui naturae intelligatur applicatum, puta sapientiae aut Gabrielis. . . .

it must be understood in terms of the form or formal principles which it actualizes. Thus even with regard to *esse* as the substantial actuality of its subject, St. Thomas does not hesitate to say:

> For the *esse* of a thing, although it be diverse from its essence, is not, however, to be understood as something superadded after the manner of an accident, but it is, as it were, constituted through the principles of the essence.[136]

For the ultimate bearing of the truth that there is a unique subsistent *esse* is not only that it is impossible to isolate *esse* as a form in thought, but that it is also impossible that *esse* be found save as the actuality of a subject literally " defining " it.

Motion is that by which an existent subject is involved in a certain kind of actuality apart from its *esse simpliciter*. The first of the ways is not concerned with the " existential act of motion " or with the existential act of the subject, either as possessed or as the term of motion. Because of the real integration of such an actuality with the subject, over and above the actuality conferred by its substantial *esse*, it would be much more accurate to speak in this manner: for the subject to be existing as moving is for the subject to be as moving, rather than in the way Father Smith's exposition has reversed the matter. For *motus* is a distinctive kind of actuality exercised by the subject: it is the " act of a being in potency insofar as it is in potency," in the proper sense of this formulation of what motion is. This is the formality involved in the first of the ways, which establishes the very question of causality involved.

The distinctive formality of *motus* must all the more urgently be respected in the light of its precise formulation. For it is an act of a subject which is neither merely potential nor simply actual, as it is moved. With regard to substantial change, *fieri*,

[136] Esse enim rei quamvis sit aliud ab eius essentia non tamen est intelligendum quod est aliquid superadditum ad modum accidentis sed quasi constituitur per principia essentiae. *In IV Met.*, lect. 2, n. 558. Cf. also I *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3: Sicut esse secundum rationem intelligendi consequitur principia ipsius entis quasi causas.

motus is the tendency to be simply, the *via ad esse simpliciter*. With regard to accidental change, it is the transition to be in a certain way, the *via ad esse aliquale*. *Motus* is not even an accidental form; it is reducible to the predicament in which its subject terminates. Thus to speak of the "existential act of sensible motion" is to speak of the act of an act, when one should speak of a certain imperfect kind of act pertaining to a subject. For it is to speak of the existential act of that whose whole character is to be distinguished against existential act, either substantial or accidental.

Like all the ways, the first proceeds from that by reason of which the subject is in act. Like the second and fifth ways, the first proceeds from a certain actuality apart from the *esse simpliciter* of the subject. Uniquely, it proceeds from an actuality by which the subject is involved in an imperfect actuality, as motion is imperfect act. Because it is this, *motus* is the act of the imperfect; it evidences limitation and places the problem of the *prima via*. The resolution of the way is conducted along the lines of what the formality of *motus* indicates. The wisdom of recognizing the fundamental role of act-potency as expressive of the various ontological integrations discovered in metaphysics, becomes apparent in the light of the unhappy results of interpreting any actuality as "existential act," *esse*, indiscriminately.

The Gilsonian preconception involved in the interpretation of the *quinque viae* is a commitment to establishing directly subsistent *esse* as their proper conclusion. The truth of the matter is that because there is a unique subsistent *esse*, whose proper effect is thus *esse*—a precise point of doctrine not possessed at the outset of the ways—the composition ranges through the actuality of all other existent realities from which the *quinque viae* do proceed. This composition is true of the *esse substantiale* by reason of which its subject actually exists; the third and fourth ways concentrate upon aspects of such composition. The composition affects other actualities accruing to existent subjects, by which they are in act in a certain way; the other ways are concerned with aspects of these actualities.

All the proofs as philosophical processes resolve the formalities with which they begin into a cause proportioned to the explanation which the formalities as they are found demand. What demands and justifies a resolution into the absolutely first cause of each effect involved, is the very character of metaphysics as it evaluates its discoveries in absolute terms of act and potency. With regard to the first way, this evaluation, and not any assumed vantage point, warrants the realization, signified by the very term itself, that the first unmoved mover is not a mover like any other mover. So much is warranted and demanded by the resolution of the effect involved. What the formality may be in itself by which the cause is constituted such a cause is another question, one not immediately involved in, or solved by, the resolution of the effect itself.

In conclusion, it is not surprising that within the Gilsonian system there should be an assumption and appropriation of truths not available to metaphysics at the point of its employment of the *quinque viae*. Given the Gilsonian concept of St. Thomas' philosophy, such an assumption is inevitable. But the misinterpretation, not of subtle nuances, but of the clear letter of texts; the subversion of the order of discovery; the neutralization of much that is basic in St. Thomas' terminology—these indicate the questionable consequences both of the total Gilsonian thesis, and of its application in the preconception of the question of God's existence in metaphysics, with its resultant interpretation of the *quinque viae*.

General Conclusion

Almost all of philosophy, St. Thomas has said, is ordered to the attainment of the knowledge of God in metaphysics, whose ultimate end such knowledge is. His teaching in the *De Trinitate* yields a principle of extension, requiring that metaphysics attain God as its end; a principle of limitation, requiring that it realize this achievement through the scientific consideration of its proper subject, being, while attaining God solely as principle of this subject. Such an ordering of metaphysics' procedures, according to its strict scientific character, has not

always been evident in the works of Thomistic authors. In fact the very nature of the science has been beset with traits at variance with St. Thomas' own view of the case. Specifically, the conditions fostering the wide divergency of views set out at the beginning of this study, have been seen to spring from the consideration of God as the scientific subject involved in metaphysics' inquiry, and the formal position and resolution of the question *an sit Deus*.

These conditions have arisen, not from the above-mentioned principles of St. Thomas, but from points of view originating in extrinsic sources, historical or personal. Their consequences are clear in the divergent attempts to resolve the question of God's existence. The manualists' presentation, seemingly along strictly philosophical lines, of the *quinque viae* is fraught with non-philosophical presuppositions in the formulation of the nominal definition of God, and ambiguous consequences as to the sense of the conclusion " God exists." The attempt by Canon Van Steenberghen to formulate the question " scientifically " through the nominal definition of God leads to an arbitrary rejection of the *quinque viae*, and to the substitution of a formula which can become a proof only by using the very evidence involved in the *quinque viae*. The attempt to proceed " existentially," in the Gilsonian sense, is based upon a doctrinaire transformation of metaphysics into theology, a transformation which is applied by assuming knowledge concerning God in order to present the dubious interpretations of the *quinque viae* as discoveries of His existence.

The consequences of St. Thomas' own statement of metaphysics' proportion to the consideration of God, however, effectively eliminate such baneful implications. Metaphysics can alone reach God as principle of its proper subject. It must consequently do so, as any science, through the investigation of that proper subject, ascending in a certain grade and order to the first cause of all being. Paradoxically, therefore, metaphysics reaches God, not by formally placing the question *an sit Deus*; or, consequently, by a careful formulation of the nominal definition of God. Neither need it seek to guarantee

its reaching God by determining its own process of discovery through knowledge gained from non-philosophical sources, however lofty in themselves, which jeopardize that discovery. Rather metaphysics reaches God by its inquiry concerning its proper subject. The question connaturally imposed as a result of this investigation is the question of the *propter quid* demanded by its subject in so far as it manifests limitation, epitomized in the points of departure of the *quinque viae*. In terms of being and the metaphysical resolution of these aspects of limitation, the science will connaturally reach its term, *esse subsistens*, which is of course God.

In order to accomplish the task of allowing metaphysics to be true to its own scientific development, to reach its term connaturally, its proper procedures, the experienced evidence warranted by the subject of the science, must be respected. Such a rigorous procedure is laborious; it has not often been executed by Thomistic authors; it necessitates avoiding certain procedures that have come to be thought of as " traditional." Nor is this process as attractive as the procedures of theology. But it is philosophy; its culmination is science, not opinion. Before the richness of the faith and the theology of the faith, such science most assuredly offers but a meagre portion concerning things divine. Yet the metaphysician who is true to his science, is a wise man in his own order. The Thomistic metaphysician who follows the process dictated by the principles of St. Thomas, is a Thomist indeed. Above all the Christian metaphysician who has attained the knowledge of the first cause in terms of metaphysics' proper ascent to such knowledge, will then be prepared to become the Christian theologian. He will be ready to bring to the service of theology a sound metaphysics, which can thus effectively reach its highest dignity, to reign by serving that Christian wisdom which is the theology whose subject is God, because it is a " kind of impression of the divine science, which is one and simple concerning all things."

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Elements of Christian Philosophy. By Etienne Gilson. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960. Pp. 360. $7.00.

ONLY forty years ago, some historians doubted whether any work of philosophic significance had been done during the middle ages. Only forty years ago, some Catholic scholars identified scholastic philosophy with the least common denominator of the positions held by Alexander of Hales, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Venerable John Duns Scotus; differences among their positions were considered details, although a line was drawn to exclude William Ockham from scholasticism. Only forty years ago, many students of Aquinas could find no important distinction between his philosophy, that of Aristotle, and that of Aquinas' various commentators. Only forty years ago, many students were taught a so-called Thomism, the conclusions of which Aquinas might have uttered, but the principles of which had more in common with the thought of Descartes, Kant, or Hegel than with that of Aquinas.

Gilson appeared; medieval philosophy had found its competent historian and effective champion. Not only those who studied with him but everyone interested in medieval philosophy learned from him. Not suddenly and not easily but by a sustained and tremendous effort, Gilson and his students dispelled a darkness that had closed over the middle ages at the renaissance. Gilson showed that genuine philosophic developments did occur during the middle ages and that modern philosophy could hardly be understood without studying the works of the great scholastic doctors. Gilson showed that differences among scholastic doctors were not mere details, that their differences were at the heart of their philosophies, and that least-common-denominator scholasticism was an invention of incompetent historians. Gilson showed that Aquinas' philo-

sophic thought is a genuine advance upon Aristotle's thought, not a mere baptism of it, and that the agreement of Aquinas' commentators with him in respect to conclusions masked their divergence from him in respect to fundamental principles—the reasons which are more characteristic of a philosophy than its conclusions. Gilson showed that the proof of Thomistic theses by employing principles indifferently—rationalist, critical, or idealist—did not represent Thomistic philosophy. In the academic world at large, Gilson established a new requirement for talking about medieval philosophy and for teaching Thomism—that one should know what he is talking about, not by description but by acquaintance; Gilson set this generation of Thomists to reading Aquinas himself.

Knowing Aquinas and being aware of the requirements for historical accuracy have not made it easier for us to teach philosophy. The lazy devices of proof by the simplest principles—even if Cartesian, Kantian, or Hegelian—and refutation of the most easily refuted adversaries—even if imaginary—no longer are practiced in good conscience. Waves of textbooks appear with increasing rapidity in recurring attempts to provide an adequate means for introducing students to the thought of Aquinas and for showing its significance without using strawmen for dialectical contrast. These efforts to present a Thomistic system have resulted in constructions showing more or less philosophic merit and debt to Aquinas. I think we could agree that most textbooks diverge sharply from Aquinas, that they are philosophically incompetent, and that they are more difficult to understand—although easier to image and memorize—than almost any work of philosophic worth. We might wish to make a few exceptions to this condemnation of the textbooks, but we would differ about the exceptions, since they would be the books from which we happen to have learned what we individually call "Thomism" or the ones our diverse philosophic views happen to reflect.

Consequently, the announcement that Professor Gilson was writing a textbook suitable to introduce students to the reading of the actual texts of Aquinas aroused considerable hope that

some of the problems of teaching philosophy were about to be eased. *Elements of Christian Philosophy* is an unusual textbook and an interesting book in its own right. It is an important book, since it presents in the most synthetic formulation Gilson has attempted so far his interpretation of Aquinas as a *Christian* philosopher and as a philosopher of *God as subsistent being*.

In this article I shall describe first the content and order of Gilson's book. Second, I shall comment on the book as a textbook. Third, I shall offer some comments on Gilson's conception of Christian philosophy.*

* * *

In a brief preface, Gilson explains the nature of this book. By " Christian philosophy," Gilson designates the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas; by " elements," he designates the basic notions and positions which are not restated in every question but which always are required for an understanding of Aquinas' answers. First and foremost among these philosophic elements, according to Gilson, is the specific way in which the theologian uses philosophy. The first of the four parts of the book, therefore, is devoted to this topic: " Revelation and the Christian Teacher."

In the first chapter, " The Teacher of Christian Truth," Gilson describes the context in which Aquinas worked—the rediscovery of Aristotle shortly before, the previous philosophic eclecticism practiced by Christian theologians, and the personal dedication of Aquinas to the vocation of student and teacher of truth about God. According to Gilson's analysis, the relationship of Aquinas to Aristotle is defined by two conditions: first, that Aristotle's philosophy represented for Aquinas the best that reason can do without divine revelation; second, that Aristotle's philosophy nevertheless was not adequate for Aquinas' purposes and needed to be completed by truths Aristotle did not see, a completion that involved basic and far-reaching

* (Editor's Note) Fr. Thomas C. O'Brien's article concluding in this issue offers criticisms of some of the chief substantive consequences of Gilson's concept of Christian Philosophy (p. 431).

modifications. However, having learned what philosophy is from Aristotle, Aquinas was forced to reinterpret previous theological work. In that work, Platonism had been a dominant influence, but the philosophic elements of theology were selected merely according to their suitability to faith, not according to any systematic requirements. Aquinas' entire effort, according to Gilson, was devoted to the study and teaching of Christian truth; the pursuit of philosophic speculation was for him a contemplative approach to God, since he was committed wholly by his vocation to study subservient to sacred doctrine.

In the second chapter, " Sacred Doctrine," Gilson follows the order of the first question of the *Summa theologiae*. In his treatise, however, Gilson does not limit himself to a recapitulation of Aquinas' teaching or to a commentary on it. Gilson emphasizes the necessity in the actual economy of salvation that matters which could be known by natural reason should be revealed. Then Gilson takes the position that natural reason can never grasp in its full application to the God of the Christian faith even those truths which natural reason can establish about God. Gilson argues that a Christian must believe in the existence of the Christian God, although the existence of a Prime Mover or a Necessary Being can be demonstrated. Further, Gilson makes much of Aquinas' metaphorical comparison of sacred doctrine to common sense; he argues that sacred doctrine is at the center of the philosophical disciplines, perceiving their objects, differences, and oppositions, dominating them and uniting them in its own unity. On this basis, Gilson delimits the class of the revealable in such a way that it is all-embracing; it includes all truths known by natural theology, physics, biology, and all other sciences. Toward the end of the chapter, Gilson discusses the various ways in which Aquinas used reason in his theology. According to Gilson, the way Aquinas preferred was to improve the doctrines of the philosophers by bringing them as close as possible to the teaching of true faith; the best contributions by Aquinas to philosophy originated in his reinterpretation of past philosophies in the light of revelation. Gilson's conclusion is that the *Summa*

theologiae is full of philosophy, although everything in it is properly theological inasmuch as it is included within the formal object of theology.

After this treatment of the first element of Christian philosophy, " Revelation and the Christian Teacher," Gilson proceeds in part two to a consideration of God. This part contains three chapters: chapter three, " The Existence of God "; chapter four, " Metaphysical Approaches to the Knowledge of God "; chapter five, " The Essence of God." The three chapters of this part contain about one-third of the entire text of the book; each of the chapters is divided into several sections.

The third chapter follows the order of the second question of the *Summa theologiae*, with the addition of interpretative comment. In describing Aquinas' doctrine on the point that the existence of God is not self-evident, Gilson tells us that Aquinas was not so much interested in particular philosophical doctrines as in pure philosophical positions. Gilson also insists that the actual existence of any object can be experienced or deduced from another actually given existence; he assumes that this position is the only alternative to saying that actual existence can be inferred from a definition. In describing Aquinas' doctrine on the point that the existence of God is demonstrable, Gilson resumes the later statements from the previous point; he interprets *a posteriori* demonstration as an argument proceeding from existence given in experience. However, Gilson insists that the demonstrations of the proposition that God exists require a previously-determined notion of the meaning of the name " God," since this meaning must function as a middle in the proof; moreover, Gilson holds that this notion must be gained from previous knowledge about God. Consequently, demonstrations of the proposition that God exists are merely technical formulations of a knowledge already possessed. Again, Gilson returns to his thesis that the existence of the Christian God is indemonstrable. He argues that those who do not know of it must believe it in any case; moreover, if the existence of the Christian God were demonstrable, the philosophizing theo-

logian would be decreasing his certitude by demonstrating it, since the certitude of faith is greater than that of reason.

In describing Aquinas' doctrine of the five ways, Gilson considers a passage in *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei* which clearly is not a proof for the existence of God and compares it with the passage in chapter four of the *De ente et essentia* which looks very much like a proof of that proposition. Gilson says that critics who have attacked the proof of the *De ente et essentia* have erred, because it was not intended to be a proof that God exists. Gilson next lays down the dictum that in interpreting Aquinas one must not take as a proof for the existence of God any argument he does not expressly formulate to support this conclusion. Gilson then proceeds to lay down three conditions for a genuinely Thomistic proof. First, it must start from some thing or experience empirically given in sense knowledge; it can start from movement or some existing thing, but not from an abstract consideration of the very act of being, since the act of being by which a thing is, is the object of intellect, not of sense. Second, Gilson reports Aquinas' statement that the meaning of " God " is the middle term, but Gilson does not mention that Aquinas gives this condition because the meaning of " God " is derived from an effect, which must function as the middle in the demonstration of the existence of a cause. Third, Gilson insists again that a provisional notion of God must pre-exist the proof. It seems that for Gilson the believer can demonstrate the existence of the Christian God only because he has a proper notion of God beforehand. In his commentary on the five ways and in his additional note on the significance of the five ways, Gilson argues at length that Aquinas has taken up proofs derived from previous thinkers, has purified them, and has united them together by means of his own notion of being.

In the final section of the third chapter, Gilson explains the meaning of the five ways. Having emphasized the historical sources used by Aquinas and having supposed that Aquinas' method here is a reinterpretation of the work of the philoso-

phers, Gilson has the problem of explaining how Aquinas has made the proofs of previous thinkers his own. According to Gilson, this question is most important, since " the very meaning of the use made of philosophy in his theology is at stake " (p. 82). Gilson argues that Aquinas did not need to prove the existence of God, since theology takes the existence of its subject matter for granted. Then Gilson argues that Aquinas did not expect philosophers to prove the existence of the God of Christian theology. Finally, Gilson argues at length that the five ways do not embody any single philosophic viewpoint: " It may not be easy or even possible to encompass all these demonstrations within the limits of one philosophy . . ." (p. 85). Rather, each of the ways gets its full meaning only within the doctrine of Aquinas wherein all of them are considered under the formal object of theology. Gilson concludes the chapter by returning to the comparison of sacred doctrine to common sense; while admitting limits to this metaphor, Gilson insists on its validity in so far as the theologian sees that the determinations of God discovered by irreducibly diverse philosophies belong to a single object known as one only under the higher formality that specifies theological consideration.

Gilson's fourth chapter, " Metaphysical Approaches to the Knowledge of God," is a brief reconstruction of the history of philosophy from the pre-Socratics, through Plato and Aristotle, to Avicenna, based on some texts from Aquinas. (The text that suggests the outline of the chapter is from *De pot.*, q. 3, art. 5.) According to Gilson, this chapter is a metaphysical meditation concerning the nature of God. For Gilson, Aquinas used the history of philosophy for theological ends:

> Having always seen philosophical progress as cumulative, he often conceived his own function as that of a theological arbiter of philosophical doctrines. For this very reason, he often practiced a kind of theological criticism of the data provided by the history of philosophy. One can also call this a critical history of philosophy conducted in the light of divine revelation (p. 90).

The point of this chapter, consequently, is twofold. On the one

hand, it provides a historical background for the development of the notion of God as pure act of being. On the other hand, it displays Aquinas' philosophical method as critical history.

Gilson's fifth chapter, " The Essence of God," is divided into four sections. The first of these is an exposition of Aquinas' doctrine concerning the knowability of God; here Gilson follows the order and content of the first two articles of Aquinas' exposition of Boethius' *De trinitate*. In the second section, Gilson expounds Aquinas' doctrine that in God there is absolutely no composition, not even of essence and being, but that God is His own being. Here Gilson raises a difficulty. Inasmuch as Aquinas' demonstrations are sound dialectically, why do they fail to win universal approval? Gilson's answer is that they presuppose Aquinas' proper notion of being as the ultimate act in each thing by which it is. Gilson then notices that not all of Aquinas' arguments rest on this notion. He explains that the properly-Thomistic doctrinal positions rest on Aquinas' own notion of being, but that Aquinas has not systematized his theology around it; rather, he has used many other arguments more acceptable to his contemporaries (pp. 121-122). The point of this section is to show Aquinas' approach to his own notion of being; therefore, Gilson concludes the section by emphasizing the relationship of creature to God as an analogous participation in pure being. In the third section, " He Who Is," Gilson argues that Aquinas did not derive his notion of being from previous philosophers, nor by argument, but from a theological reflection on sacred scripture conducted with full information on the philosophic history of the notion of being. In proving this position, Gilson maintains that the apparent demonstration of the distinction between essence and existence in the *De ente et essentia* is not really a demonstration of this distinction, but only that whatever has an essence and exists does so in virtue of an external cause (pp. 127-128). In the fourth section, " Reflections on the Notion of Being," Gilson argues that the notion of essence is maintained in application to God only to provide a point of reference for the negation

of essence when God is posited as a beyond-essence, or pure act of being.

Following this treatment of God, Gilson proceeds in part three of *Elements of Christian Philosophy* to consider being. This part also contains three chapters: chapter six, " God and the Transcendentals "; chapter seven, " Being and Creation "; and chapter eight, " Being and Causality." This order arises from the fact that Gilson treats the transcendentals primarily as divine names and treats causality as the structuring relationship of the hierarchy of beings, determined according to the mode in which creatures participate analogously in divine being and imitate divine creativity. Three main points fix Gilson's interpretation of Aquinas' doctrine in these three chapters; in each of the chapters, one of them receives its greatest emphasis. In chapter six, Gilson emphasizes his position that inasmuch as Aquinas is a theologian, the only analogy important for him is that of creatures to God. The development of this point makes Gilson's treatment of the transcendentals illustrate his view of the method of negative theology. In chapter seven, Gilson emphasizes his position that for Aquinas all knowledge is theological inasmuch as it concerns the revealable. The development of this point makes Gilson's treatment of creation illustrate his method of determining the meaning of key philosophic notions from positions depending on revealed truths in which they are present. In chapter eight, Gilson emphasizes his position that for Aquinas essence is a possibility for being. The development of this point makes Gilson's treatment of causality illustrate his method of determining the meaning of *esse* by reference to God. The treatment of being in part three thus forms a repetition and extension of the view already presented in part two. The same interpretative framework is filled in a second time, as it were as a test; no alteration is found to be required in it.

Gilson devotes the fourth and final part of the book to four chapters, nine to twelve, concerning man. These chapters correspond more nearly than any of the earlier parts of the book

to work that Gilson has published previously, especially in the *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas.* Even here, however, the interpretation Gilson offers has been developed in accordance with the methods presented in the previous chapters. The effect is most striking in the last chapter; here Gilson applies his view of causality as hierarchical to the relation between man and society, projecting a metaphysics of society that is unprecedented in his earlier work.

* * *

In *Elements of Christian Philosophy* itself (pp. 228-229), Gilson comments on the necessity of reducing metaphysics to a set of syllogistically-linked and systematically-expounded abstract notions in order to make it teachable. In earlier writings, Gilson discussed both the necessity of using textbooks and the problems of teaching metaphysics. In *History of Philosophy and Philosophical Education* (Marquette University Press: Milwaukee, 1948, pp. 12-15), Gilson stated his views about textbooks. For beginners, a compendious course, of which the textbook *ad mentem divi Thomae* is an example, is a necessity. It provides an extrinsic description, which Gilson compared to a map of an unknown country, that is a suitable first contact with philosophy. Gilson also argued that an introductory work of some kind is needed for the personal reading of Aquinas' own works, since they were not written for beginners. He pointed to the tremendous volume and success of such literature for evidence that it really is necessary.

In a lecture delivered at the Aquinas foundation of Princeton University in 1953, Gilson pointed out texts in which Aquinas clearly says that young people cannot learn metaphysics and ethics; moreover, Gilson emphasized that "young" here includes all college and university students. Consequently, Gilson asked himself how Aquinas and his contemporaries studied and taught philosophy. His solution was that Aquinas and his contemporaries did not engage in studying and teaching pure philosophy, but in studying and teaching theology with a good deal of philosophic content, or at least in studying and teaching

philosophy without prescinding from faith and with a view toward theology. While Gilson did not offer any simple or general solution to the problems of teaching metaphysics and ethics, and while he pointed out that the history of philosophy is no easier to understand than philosophy itself, he thought that communication between philosophy professors in Catholic colleges and their students could be improved if philosophy were done more nearly in the manner in which it was done in the *Summa theologiae* itself:

> But there is a great deal of straight rational speculation concerning God, human nature, and morality included in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. On this precise point, my sole conclusion has been to the effect that, if we wish to introduce Christian students to metaphysics and ethics, to teach them the relevant parts of his theology will be to provide them with the best short cut to some understanding of these disciplines. ("Thomas Aquinas and Our Colleagues," *A Gilson Reader*, ch. 17, ed. A. C. Pegis; Doubleday & Co.: Garden City, Long Island, New York, 1957, p. 292.)

In the light of these statements, made by Gilson himself, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* takes on significance and the criticism of it as a textbook has both greater importance and greater difficulty than it would have otherwise. Moreover, this book is part of a series to be published by Doubleday under the editorship of Professor Pegis. Pegis himself promises an introduction to philosophy and others are preparing a four-volume history of philosophy. Books of readings in paperback format also are planned. If the entire series were available, the question could be posed whether the series could be adopted as a whole. Any judgments made on this book as a textbook considered by itself might be altered significantly in such a consideration. Concerning *Elements of Christian Philosophy* as a textbook, therefore, I offer only tentative criticism. Furthermore, I should like my remarks under this heading to be understood as suggestions for the *consideration* of those thinking of adopting the book for use in undergraduate courses as a required textbook.

The first point to be made in praise of the book is that it has historical sense and that it treats genuine philosophical problems with a degree of complexity adequate to keep them from becoming spurious. In this respect, the book contrasts sharply with the ordinary manual's ineptness in its historical remarks, inaccuracies in its references to philosophical sources, and simple-minded reduction of all problems to visual schemata and verbal manipulation. By this very virtue, however, Gilson seems to have departed from the requirements which he himself set for a textbook, since he is not merely presenting extrinic description, but is attempting to communicate a grasp on the elements that must be understood for an intrinsic understanding of Aquinas' positions.

Another point that might be argued in favor of the book—this characteristic agrees with Gilson's own requirements for teaching metaphysics to young people—is that it immediately brings to bear notions which students may have acquired in their religious education. Of course, if a teacher considers that a most important point in beginning philosophy is to lead students to understand that it is not what they call " religion," then this aspect of Gilson's effort will be considered a defect; certainly, few teachers could lead many students to see a difference between what Gilson is offering and what is taught in religion courses. A further difficulty arises if a class includes non-Catholic students. Moreover, some may object, even in the case of Catholic students, that the apparent familiarity of the subject matter only will confuse a student who begins with Gilson's book; students may feel that they understand philosophy just as they feel that they understand their faith, although it is clear that they understand neither. One real advantage of attempting to teach metaphysics is that students can discover that they do no understand it and this discovery sometimes can be extended to include a realization that they do not understand the Epistles or the Psalms either. It even happens now and then that faith—aware that it does not understand—begins to seek understanding.

However, I do not think that *Elements of Christian Philosophy* can serve as the basic text for a course in metaphysics preceded only by logic. Gilson assumes much historical background, both because he constantly alludes to ancient and medieval philosophic works for substantive points and because his interpretation of Aquinas makes Aquinas' metaphysical method appear to be a theologically-informed historical criticism of previous philosophy. With a beginning student, fundamental notions—such as potency, essence, substance—cannot be treated lightly; one must do something to convince the student either that he understands these notions or that he cannot understand them. Perhaps *Elements of Christian Philosophy* could be studied after an introduction and a history of ancient and medieval philosophy; if so, the other books of the series to which this one belongs might supply the needed materials.

More serious, however, is that Gilson's book shows how Aquinas' philosophy really is; if such an exposition is to be understood, it must be read against a background of direct acquaintance with Aquinas' works themselves, so that a student at least will know how Aquinas' thought appears to be. Without such a background, a student could not appreciate Gilson's insight into the real meanings which are hidden by what Aquinas actually says, particularly in works such as the *De ente et essentia*. (See pp. 121-122 where Gilson shows that Aquinas' works are full of non-Thomistic arguments; pp. 127-128 where Gilson shows that a central argument of the *De ente et essentia* does not prove what it seems to prove.) Of course, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* could be used in a graduate course; it might be compared with other interpretations of Aquinas' work to illustrate the difficulty of philosophic communication.

Another point against this book is that it is not written clearly. The *Summa theologiae* itself is a model of what I mean by "written clearly," since one has no difficulty in outlining it and no doubt at any point concerning what the question is. Gilson formerly followed this model, but I suggest that anyone

considering using *Elements of Christian Philosophy* as a textbook might try to outline a chapter such as the first or the eighth. Also consider whether prospective students would be able to follow the line of questions. The treatment moves swiftly from substantive questions in metaphysics, to problems of interpretation, to theological issues concerning the function of metaphysics in theology, to historical questions. Considerable attention is devoted to controversies between Gilson and his critics, and the critics are treated in such a way that previous acquaintance with them is necessary to understand Gilson's *apologiae*. Of course, judgments on the clarity of any writing are not likely to receive universal agreement, but it seems to me that most of Gilson's earlier works—*The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* is a good example—are more carefully written and are clearer than this book, although this is his first textbook.

Even deeper than this lack of clarity, however, is the frequent difficulty one has in understanding Gilson in passages in which his statements initially seem clear. There are many passages which convey simply what Gilson does not mean, but which defy positive interpretation. For example, when Gilson raises the question whether the Christian God "is identically the same Whose existence can be demonstrated in five ways" (p. 26), we know immediately that he does not mean that there are many Gods or that the existence of God is not demonstrable. The apparent polytheism certainly is only a manner of speaking, but it is not easy to eliminate this manner of speaking and to express what Gilson is saying. I do not deny that Gilson could do so; I merely doubt that he provides the resources that a student needs. Again, when Gilson speaks of potency as "incomplete actuality considered in its aptitude to achieve a more complete state of actuality" (p. 62), we know that he does not mean to essentialize being and to predicate existence univocally, reducing differences between potentiality and actuality to different degrees of an essential nature of being. But, then, how are such statements to be construed? How would a

student who is not aware of the implication of calling potency "incomplete actuality" understand anything else but what Gilson does not mean? Again, when Gilson says that "the relationship of efficient causality is empirically given in sense experience" (p. 70), we know that he does not intend to reduce cause to action-passion. Gilson certainly would not deny the point on which Aquinas insists, that it is proper to reason to know order and that a knowledge of causes as such is attained in demonstration, not in sense experience (*In I Eth.*, prologus; *In I Post. anal.*, lect. xlii). Still, how would a student understand Gilson otherwise than as maintaining that he finds in his sense experience what Aquinas holds cannot be there? Again, when Gilson says that the notion of being proper to Aquinas is one with the notion of God and refers to God as "the supreme Being *qua* Being" (pp. 85-86), we know that he does not intend his remark to carry the fullness of its pantheistic meaning. But, then, how would a student understand such a remark if he were not aware of the separation Aquinas insists upon between the subject matter of metaphysics and that of sacred doctrine (*In de trin.*, qu. 5, art. 4, c.). *Elements of Christian Philosophy* abounds in similar passages. Does the method of negative theology involve *denying* true propositions (p. 140)? Does essence mean *esse* when we attribute essence to God (p. 138)? Does every knowledge of God require grace (p. 181)? Yet it should be noticed that in many cases Gilson's accurate summaries of Aquinas' explicit doctrine would provide a really attentive and capable student with the means to control his interpretation of such ambiguous or difficult-to-understand statements.

Due to the many-leveled difficulty of *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, I do not believe it can serve as a college textbook. It is too metaphysical to avoid the fact that young people cannot learn metaphysics. Indeed, I do not think there is a genuine solution to this problem. To teach a non-philosophic description of philosophy is possible, but I know of no good reason for doing it. To teach an understandable but pseudo-meta-

physical doctrine is possible; indeed, it was done by the sophists of old and is done still by their modern counterparts. To teach a theology without metaphysics in which matters accessible to reason are emphasized is possible, but an unmutilated theology is much better than a mutilated one. (I do not suggest that Gilson offers a mutilated theology; he presents metaphysical reasoning as well as historical argumentation.) I do not believe the statements of Aquinas concerning the non-teachability of metaphysics to young people can be escaped. If you ask how Aquinas himself was able to learn metaphysics, although he died before he was fifty, my answer is not that he studied theology insead of metaphysics, since I think he studied both and that he could not have accomplished what he did in theology without having accomplished what he did in metaphysics. Rather, I should say that Aquinas' statements concerning the teaching of philosophy are true in general, although they do admit of exceptions. Some important figures in the history of philosophy have been among the exceptions, but most college students are not. I think it is this fact, rather than any innate wrong-headedness, which accounts for the repeated misinterpretations to which Aquinas, together with other great philosophers, has been subjected.

* * *

One aspect of *Elements of Christian Philosophy* that will provoke much discussion is the very view of Christian philosophy which Gilson presents here. The position is not new, since he has been developing it through many years and many works, but his view is developed more fully here than it has been previously. (One recent exposition is: "What is Christian Philosophy?" *A Gilson Reader*, pp. 177-191.) An adequate study of this topic would extend beyond the limits of this article, for it would require familiarity with a vast literature. Moreover, the problems involved in this question are many and difficult; no brief treatment can deal with them. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to indicate here what these problems are and to suggest some points which I think are relevant to their discussion.

In the first place, I think it relevant to recall that Gilson has argued long and effectively against the view that there is nothing philosophically significant in the thought of the middle ages. Against the view that historians of philosophy can ignore the whole medieval period on the ground that it is " only theology," Gilson has shown conclusively that Christian philosophy was a historical reality which ought not to be ignored. Only those who are so dogmatically committed to an anti-religious naturalism that they are willing to reject mountainous evidence against their merely-contentious thesis can deny that philosophy was alive and developing during the middle ages. Moreover, recent research on the works of Aquinas and others, in which Gilson played a leading role, has shown that any philosopher has, on the whole, as much to learn from his medieval predecessors as he has to learn from the ancients and from the moderns. In short, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* and the *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* proved their central thesis. However, Gilson's present thesis concerning Christian philosophy goes beyond his amply-demonstrated earlier position.

In the second place, I think it relevant to recall that Gilson has solid ground for maintaining the need for attention to the theological character of the *Summa theologiae* and the other theological works of Aquinas. No adequate interpretation can ignore the determining character of the work it interprets; to extract selections from Aquinas' works and to rearrange them in an order he never used, supplying connecting links he never required, and directing them to purposes he never envisaged surely is to construct a philosophy out of Aquinas' dead words, not to understand the philosophy in Aquinas' living communication. Whatever is the way in which one can learn philosophy from the *Summa theologiae*, one cannot learn it by pretending that the treatise on the unity of God has nothing to do with the treatise on the Trinity, or by pretending that the quotation from sacred scripture often given in the *sed contra* has nothing to do with the argument presented in the *respondeo*. Moreover, although the question of Aquinas' commentaries on Aristotle

is a complicated one that must be treated sentence by sentence, not once for all, I think it is correct to say that these commentaries cannot be identified with Aquinas' philosophy and that they cannot be used to control the interpretation of Aquinas' other works in the same way that the other works can be used to control each other's interpretation. A statement in a commentary is a comment unless it reveals itself to be a more direct expression of its author's thought; comments reveal their author's thought only as a function of what is commented upon.

In the third place, I think it important to notice that it is legitimate to call Christian faith itself " Christian Philosophy," as Gilson has stated (" What is Christian Philosophy? " *A Gilson Reader*, pp. 177-179) . This mode of expressing ourselves is honored by tradition and it agrees with the current use of " philosophy " to designate the most basic and far-reaching principles determining the view of life and reality that one holds, regardless of the ground on which it is held. In this sense, everyone has a philosophy of life, and the Christian's philosophy is his faith. But Gilson means more than this, or something other than this, when he writes " Christian philosophy."

In the fourth place, it is important to notice that it is legitimate to call any use of reason or borrowing from its proper works a " Christian philosophy " in so far as it contributes to the elaboration of a theology. This designation is well-grounded in the Leonine restoration, as Gilson has said (" What is Christian Philosophy? " *A Gilson Reader*, pp. 186-187; p. 191, n. 10) . Moreover, this manner of speaking agrees with another current use of " philosophy," which sometimes designates the rational elaboration of any set of beliefs—for example, " conservative philosophy," " business philosophy," and " the American philosophy." In this sense, every theology and ideology is a philosophy, for each presents a clarification, systematization, and apologetic for a faith, without the beliefs ceasing thereby to be beliefs. However, Gilson means something different from this too, for he distinguishes between philosophy and theology in a way that this use of " philosophy " does not. Moreover,

the topics and manner of *Elements of Christian Philosophy* are not the ones a theologian would use. (See Gilson's explanation —*Elements*, pp. 309-310—for treating the transcendentals in the order: one, true, good.) If Gilson had treated theological topics in a theological mode, it would be clear that he meant to advocate that Christians should study theology and that they should not study philosophy apart from integral theology. But Gilson's position cannot be simplified in this way. For Gilson, " Christian philosophy " designates a rational elaboration of the revealable which is knowable by natural reason; thus it can be compared to non-Christian philosophies in its subject matter but cannot be compared to them in its point of view. *Elements of Christian Philosophy* reveals many vestiges of Gilson's wrestling with the historical phenomenon of philosophical pluralism; Gilson's notion of Christian philosophy itself bears such imprints most clearly.

In the fifth place, it seems to me that it is a mistake to argue against Gilson that faith ought to be only a negative norm for Christian philosophy. A Christian philosopher is not hindered by his faith, but helped by it. He cannot philosophize as though he had no faith, nor would it be reasonable to try or to pretend to do so. Faith does not provide a merely negative norm for philosophy; in fact, in a way it cannot provide a negative norm, since a philosopher as philosopher must accept evidence and judge according to it. Consequently, a philosopher must be willing to discard any belief if it should prove false. (Notice that the beliefs of a Christian philosopher, even if they pertain to matters of Christian faith, can and do prove false, since even assuming that the Christian faith is true, material heresy does occur. Incautious application of the norm of faith often has led to positions inconsistent with faith itself or inconsistent with evidence that is completely concordant with faith. Whenever a serious Christian thinker meets an apparent conflict between what he believes and what he thinks evidence requires, he asks himself at least three questions: 1. Is there a conflict? 2. Does my belief really belong to the Christian faith? 3. Does

this judgment really follow necessarily from the evidence?) At the same time, a Christian philosopher benefits not only by having revealed to him for serious philosophic consideration many truths he would not discover otherwise, but also by being stimulated by the needs of theology to develop the potentiality of reason as fully as possible within its natural competence without subverting it to technical, practical, or game-like ends. Moreover, a Christian philosopher may receive from Christian life an integration of personality without which intellectual development is extremely difficult or impossible. Thus, even if Gilson's notion of Christian philosophy should be rejected, it seems to me that there is a meaning for " Christian philosophy " which goes beyond saying that philosophy has been taught by Christians and that it does not conflict with Christian faith.

In the sixth place, I do not think one can argue from a philosopher—either in his psychological, historical, or social conditions—to his philosophy without falling into serious errors. Gilson seems to attempt such an argument in *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (ch. 1, esp. pp. 19-21; p. 283, n. 11). Clearly, one cannot abstract from an author in interpreting his communications; one cannot abstract from the personality of a thinker in considering his acts of thinking; one cannot abstract from the motives of one who assents in criticizing the content of his beliefs or opinions; one cannot abstract from the mind that does not know in examining the limits of its knowledge. The impossibility of these abstractions renders plausible doctrines which maintain the relativity of truth to psychological, historical, and social conditions. However, one must abstract from psychological, historical, and social conditions in grasping the evident and in demonstrating scientific knowledge by reduction to evidence. Otherwise, there is no such knowledge; moreover, if there were any, it could not be communicated, since the conditions of different knowers are never precisely the same.

" Knowledge " is ambiguous, since it refers either to an act

of knowing or to what is known precisely in so far as it is known. If I understand Gilson's position, he ignores this ambiguity. If the ambiguity were taken into account, it seems to me it would be clear that philosophic knowledge itself cannot be characterized from the historical conditions in which it is developed, from the personality and motivations of the one who develops it, or from social requirements—even from the requirements of the Church in its teaching of sacred doctrine. It is clear that Aquinas' personality was relevant to his philosophizing; it is equally clear that Aquinas' personality was irrelevant to what he philosophized. (The impersonality of Aquinas' style is a sign of what he wished to convey.) Even if the philosophy Aquinas philosophized were expressed only in his theological works, still if it could be found there at all, it would have to be discovered by extrapolating from statements made in the theological context the subject matter, method, principles, and internal ends of the philosophy itself.

Moreover, if philosophy cannot be transformed by theology unless it is constituted in itself by all that it requires to be philosophy—as I think and shall explain next—then the only way to understand the philosophy in a theology is by considering the conditions required by the philosophy itself in abstraction, but not separation or precision, from its theological transformation. I do not believe Professor Gilson makes such an attempt, for the simple reason that he does not think it necessary. Indeed, the understanding of philosophy is not necessary for history, which can rest in a consideration of human actions and communication, but it is necessary for the dialectic which uses what others have philosophized to further philosophy, since the philosophy which is philosophized is not a human action or communication but is an ordered group of *verba intellecta*, which generally is called " a philosophic view." (This metaphor is misleading, however, since philosophic knowledge and the viewpoint from which a philosopher knows are identical; one cannot have or use a philosophic point of view without having a philosophized philosophy. I do not think that revela-

tion can substitute for a philosophic point of view, because in so far as a truth is accepted on the authority of revelation, the intellect is not determined by the evidence of the object itself; nevertheless, given a philosophic point of view, other truths which are relevant to it, although they remain inevident, may be integrated with it.)

In the seventh place, I do not think that a philosophy can be of use to theology unless it is constituted in itself by all that is required of it to be philosophy. Gilson seems to be arguing in *Elements of Christian Philosophy* that it can (pp. 130-133). According to his argument, the Thomistic distinction between essence and existence cannot be demonstrated without presupposing the properly-Thomistic notion of being, and that notion must have been attained first in interpreting the divine revelation, " I am Who am "; thereupon Thomistic metaphysics became possible and began. Gilson has argued (pp. 127-128) that the apparent demonstration of the distinction in the *De ente et essentia* (ch. 4), really is not a demonstration of it at all. It seems to me that the context of this passage reveals a radical difference between it and the argument of Avicenna to which Gilson wishes to assimilate it. Further, although this argument is in a way similar to dialectical argumentation, I do not think it is dialectical; rather, it is an example of the metaphysical method which Aquinas himself explicitly describes and distinguishes from dialectic (*In de trin.*, qu. 6, art. 1 [a], c.). If Gilson's argument concerning the derivation of the distinction between essence and existence were sound, then perhaps it would follow that Aquinas utilized in his theology a metaphysics which was not constituted in itself except in virtue of that use, for the distinction does permeate Aquinas' metaphysical thought.

Now, it certainly is true that one can begin to study metaphysics while attempting to understand what one believes. One need not be personally interested in knowing metaphysics for its own sake in the sense that he orders this knowledge to no further end. Nor need a theologian first form a complete meta-

physics, only afterwards beginning to use it in his theology. Moreover, it is evident that no one need devote himself to expounding philosophy; we should hardly expect that Aquinas, who was committed to teaching theology, should have done so. Finally, it is true that revelation, Christian teaching, and the Christian's immediate religious experience are thoroughly integrated with other sources of knowledge, mediate and immediate, in the genesis of a Christian's thought; in his intellectual development, notions are formed, truths learned, and knowledge is organized without the distinction among sources being noticed. The distinction between philosophy and theology is drawn by a Christian only after he has followed a *via inquisitionis* relevant to both of them. Nevertheless, it does not seem to me that philosophy can be used in the light of faith to develop a science of theology unless that philosophy has in itself what is required for it to be philosophy. Philosophy need not be presented standing by itself, but it must be able to stand by itself. Even in respect to the psychological genesis of the notion of being, it does not seem to me that anyone would interpret God's revelation of His proper name as Aquinas interpreted it unless he had in advance the notion of being which Aquinas had, since others did interpret it with other valid interpretations. (Although this matter involves theological considerations which are beyond my competence, it may not be impertinent to raise the question whether any new simple notion can be acquired from revelation. If the answer is affirmative, a further question might be how interpretations involving such notions could be validated.)

My contention is that the *via resolutionis* required by philosophy as philosophy is not merely a matter of style or order of presentation, but that it is essential to the constitution of philosophy. Although sacred doctrine rightly treats all things considered by all human sciences, it cannot include all *verba intellecta* attained by all human sciences. On this ground, I disagree with Gilson's statement: "In short, that which is known of God to the philosopher *qua* philosopher is also known

to the theologian *qua* theologian " (p. 38). Of course, the theologian knows of God all that the philosopher knows of Him and more, but the theologian cannot know *qua* theologian what the philosopher knows *qua* philosopher, unless there is no distinction between the two knowledges. The distinction, of course, is formal, but it is not merely verbal; formal distinctions are distinctions among cognitive contents that cannot be ignored without error. Thus, God's essence is His existence, but " essence " does not mean existence, even in predications concerning God. In short, I think that in his treatment of the relation between theology and philosophy, Gilson consistently ignores the distinction between knowledges and things; the fact that sacred doctrine treats all things does not imply that it includes all knowledges. Although it is true that Aquinas was not concerned about this point for the protection of the integrity of philosophy, we must be concerned about it if we seek from Aquinas any philosophy or aid to philosophy other than the philosophy in his very texts just as it is found in them. Gilson remarks: " It is somewhat distressing that the same men who preach that grace can make a man a morally better man refuse to admit that revelation can make a philosophy a better philosophy " (p. 283, n. 11). I would not deny that philosophy is assisted by revelation, but I think the strict parallelism which Gilson assumes is false, since a philosophy is not *in rerum natura* and the structure of the intentional realm is not identical with that of reality, except on Platonic assumptions which Aquinas repeatedly rejects.

In the eighth place, I do not think that a criticism of the history of philosophy in the light of divine revelation is a philosophic method; moreover, I do not think that philosophic development occurs without the use of a philosophic method. Gilson seems to think otherwise. He chaacterizes Aquinas' procedure as follows: " For this very reason, he often practiced a kind of theological criticism of the data provided by the history of philosophy " (p. 90). Gilson previously had used this view to account for Aquinas' presentation of the five ways (pp. 42

and 85). Again, he says: "The most original part of the contribution made by Thomas Aquinas to philosophy has its origin in this rational reinterpretation of the philosophies of the past in the light of theological truth" (p. 41).

Now, it is true that Aquinas used the results of previous philosophy in the course of his theological work. The question is whether Aquinas did not achieve a philosophic advance upon what his predecessors had done by having a better, or at least different, philosophic method and by using its results to criticize the results of the methods others had used. To be sure, it is possible for a theologian to criticize philosophy and to reinterpret it rationally in the light of divine revelation without having a philosophic method. He can proceed with nothing but faith and dialectic. The outcome of such a procedure is a type of theology that always has been prevalent; it borrows from philosophies in an eclectic manner. It is also true that a theologian who has a philosophical method and who uses it constantly need not reveal that method in his theological works. To suppose otherwise would be to confuse philosophy and theology with their symbolic manifestation in language. I hesitate to say that Gilson has fallen into this confusion.

Nevertheless, if the two *Summae* were Aquinas' only works, how could we understand his metaphysics? Fortunately, these theological masterpieces are not his only works. We have his *De ente et essentia* and we have his exposition of Boethius' *De trinitate*. In these works, I think that Aquinas wrote a metaphysics and explained in a clear and exact manner what metaphysics is and what its method is. On the principle of interpretation that an *ex professo* treatment takes precedence over all others, I think these works should provide the point of departure for any attempt to explicate Aquinas' metaphysics. I object to Gilson's account of Aquinas' metaphysics because he has not given sufficient weight to the *De ente et essentia*, because he has not treated it as a whole and interpreted it systematically, and because he has ignored Aquinas' treatment of the nature and method of metaphysics in his exposition of Boethius' *De trinitate*.

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In view of Gilson's tremendous contribution to the work of the Leonine restoration, I am sure there will be many who will attempt to follow his interpretation of Aquinas' metaphysics of existence and doctrine concerning philosophic knowledge of God as far as possible, while parting with him on the question of Christian philosophy. Yet for Gilson himself, his notion of Christian philosophy is fundamental to his understading of Aquinas' entire teaching. I think it would be a sign of disrespect for Gilson's competence to suppose that his interpretations on substantive points can be detached from his thesis concerning the relation between revelation and philosophy in Aquinas' work. Without his notion of Christian philosophy, we must ask ourselves, how plausible is Gilson's interpretation of the requirements for a proof of the proposition that God exists? How true to Aquinas is his notion of essence, a notion he claims is maintained in respect to God only to provide a reference-point for knowing God as a super-essential pure act of being? In answering these questions we must remember that they are closely related to Gilson's treatment of all the key metaphysical topics: potency, existence, analogy, causality, and the transcendentals. In every case one must assume the coherence of Gilson's interpretation unless there is cogent evidence for denying it, for Gilson himself forms the connections with plausible lines of reasoning.

Furthermore, if we find that we must reject Gilson's notion of Christian philosophy, then it seems to me we must find also that the mode of interpretation he has followed is not adequate to the task he has undertaken. The task set us by Leo XIII included two elements: to restore Christian philosophy and to augment it. It seems evident to me that a purely historical procedure is not adequate to accomplish the second part of this task. But it seems to me also that a complete restoration of the achievements of the great scholastics cannot occur unless we learn to philosophize from the very beginning of philosophy with the methods and principles they used. Our office as philosophers is not to restore St. Thomas Aquinas; only God can

restore him come judgment day. Rather, our office is to restore the order of truth he achieved by achieving it ourselves. History necessarily considers every statement in relation to its author and his contingent conditions; therefore, history inevitably reduces all knowledge to opinion or transforms it into faith. Consequently, a purely historical procedure not only restrains us from considering the new problems or new forms of old problems which have arisen since the thirteenth century, but even prohibits us from attaining fully the demonstrative knowledge to which Aquinas and others attained. Without such a full attainment, we shall fail to fulfill the task Leo XIII pointed out to us, a task even more urgent today than it was one hundred years ago.

I do not suggest that we should represent the work of Aquinas otherwise than it was in order to make his philosophy attractive to our contemporaries. Philosophy is not apologetics and rhetoric is not demonstration; we ought not to consider our work from the point of view of rhetoric, since false opinions always can be made more attractive than demonstrated truths. We must enter into full communication with other contemporary philosophers only because such communication is an inherent attribute of our human way of learning. At the same time, we should continue to learn from Aquinas to imitate fully the method with which he philosophized; if we do learn his method, we shall become able to present the truths he knew as truths to be known in the light of evidence, not merely as opinions to be maintained out of loyalty to a tradition. What is important for philosophy is not what men have said, but the truths which things require us to think of them.

Nor do I suggest that we should abandon historical study of the works of Aquinas; such study always will be valuable, since it is a necessary although insufficient condition for attaining a knowledge of things such as he attained. I am maintaining only that the meanings of " historical " and " existential " ought not to be confused and that one cannot know Aquinas' philosophy without knowing things as he knew them. Since it is

only natural for history to attempt to proceed in the opposite direction, history as such is an insufficient discipline for learning philosophy. The texts of Aquinas belong in the most prominent place in the dialectical introduction to our philosophizing, but to know philosophic subject matters as Aquinas knew them, we must use the method he used and begin from the principles from which his philosophy began.

The argument of the *De ente et essentia* is involved very peculiarly with logic; moreover, one method appropriate to metaphysics is called "rational," inasmuch as metaphysics properly begins from principles taught by logic (*In de trin.*, qu. 6, art. 1 (a), c.). Yet Aquinas' logic remains ignored almost totally. An incapacity to achieve demonstrative knowledge of a subject matter from the study of works of those who have attained such knowledge is no fault of historical method, but it does show want of training in logic; consequently, it seems to me that the time has come to study logic and to rediscover the metaphysical method which Aquinas used. Aquinas' act of philosophizing cannot be understood apart from history, but what he philosophized cannot be restored without logic; the method of metaphysics is not a theological use of history. If Aquinas' logic were studied and the method of his metaphysics were acquired, perhaps the *De ente et essentia* could be understood. If the *De ente et essentia* were understood, I think it might become clear to us how Aquinas' notion of being was formed and how he became capable of interpreting "He Who Is" in a new way.

Professor Gilson has made many great contributions to our understanding of medieval philosophy. *Elements of Christian Philosophy* no doubt is an important work; it deserves to be studied and discussed thoroughly. I have commented upon it in a manner that I hope will encourage careful reading and stimulate serious discussion. Professor Gilson's tremendous scholarship, brilliant insight, and intellectual integrity appear on every page of this work, but all of us have become accustomed to expect of him a measure of these qualities which would

startle us if we found evidence of it in the work of lesser men. Without the work of Professor Gilson and without the teaching he has carried on—not only of his auditors, but also of the readers of his many published works—none of us would be able to do what needs to be done next. I do not claim to see clearly the priority of logic to history in the method of metaphysics. I merely suspect what we might see if we stand upon the shoulders of this giant—Etienne Gilson.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Die Gedanken des heiligen Albertus Magnus über die Gottesmutter. (Thomistische Studien. Schriftenreihe der "Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie" VII. Band.) By Albert Fries, C.Ss.R. Freiburg Schweiz: Paulusverlag, 1959. Pp. 423, with indices. 26 Swiss Francs.

It is now several years since two scholars, working independently, showed that St. Albert the Great did not write the famous *Mariale super missus est.* Through more than half a century of critical studies, the Albertine authorship of the *Mariale* had never been seriously called into question, even when other writings were recognized as inauthentic, e. g., *De laudibus* (actually Richard of St. Lawrence), and the *Biblia mariana.* St. Albert was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1932; that he was also *doctor marianus* was usually demonstrated from the *Mariale,* with its stress on Mary's role in the redemptive work of Christ, not only through her consent at the Annunciation, but also by her compassion on Calvary. Up to the mid-fifties, many studies on the mediation and spiritual maternity of Mary invoked the authority of St. Albert, chiefly on the strength of the *Mariale.*

In 1954 Albert Fries, C. Ss. R., a member of the St. Albert Institute for the new Cologne critical edition of St. Albert (in publication since 1951), reported on his researches. After examining the *Mariale, Biblia mariana, Compendium super Ave Maria,* and other shorter Marian titles attributed to Albert, he came to the verdict that all these expressly Marian works were not written by St. Albert. (Cf. *Die unter dem Namen des Albertus Magnus überlieferten Mariologische Schriften. literarkristische Untersuchung,* in the series *Beitraege zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters,* Band XXVII—Heft 4, Muenster Westf., Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1954.)

In the same year, and on the same basis of internal evidence, Bruno Korosak, O. F. M., published *Mariologia S. Alberti Magni eiusque coaequalium,* in the *Bibliotheca Mariana Medii Aevi,* fasc. VIII, Romae, Academia Mariana Internationalis, 1954. Korosak also excludes the *Mariale* and a number of other titles from the list of genuine Albertine writings, although he admits as probably authentic some of the smaller works refused by Fries.

It is no wonder that the question began to be asked, "What then remains of the Marian theology of St. Albert the Great?" At the end of his 1954 volume, Fries published a list of authentic Marian writings of St. Albert with capsule indications of their content. Now, in his new book,

Die Gedanken . . . Fries shows that a great body of Marian doctrine is to be found in St. Albert's exegetical and theological writings. Rather than being a " maverick," St. Albert was very much a theologian of his time: he did not essay a systematic treatise in Mariology: that was not to be effectively done until Suarez in the seventeenth century. Rather, he studied our Lady, her privileges, her place in the plan of salvation, in the context of the rest of theology and of sacred Scripture. Many of the positions on Marian doctrine taken by Albert became classic—to be adopted by St. Thomas as his own, and to provide the solid and sober groundwork for further scholastic development.

Fries arranges his materials in chronological order—twenty-four titles, both printed and manuscript, which contains Marian passages. They cover ascetic theology, systematic theology (e.g., commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, but also *De incarnatione*, and even *Quaestiones mariologicae*), and exegesis (as the *Postilla super Isaiam*, but especially the gospel commentaries). The commentary on St. Luke receives the most attention—pp. 209-325, a small book in itself. In addition to the Lucan commentary, the *Super III Sententiarum* and the *Commentarium super Matthaeum* rank as the most important sources of Albert's Marian theology.

The central element in Albert's Mariology is its Christological orientation. Fries puts it well " Not the Mariology of a system, but Mariology in a situation, as a function of Christology." Nonetheless, Marian theology may be called a preoccupation of the saint, who uses every opportunity to speak of Mary in connection with other truths of the faith or in commenting on sacred Scripture. The Eucharist and our Lady are the two areas in which Albert excelled in his use of Scripture and the Fathers.

Albert follows the Aristotelian notion of the purely passive role of the mother in the origin of her child's body. He considers Mary's maternity as also entirely passive, with the Holy Spirit miraculously causing the effects normally produced by the male seed. Physically, our Lady's maternal contribution was her blood, from which Christ's body was formed. Albert's uniform insistence on this point for the formation of Christ's body, even when he had come to admit in a late work (*super Joannem*) that there was some special material for generation (*Keimstoff*) supplied by the woman in ordinary human generation, served Fries as a clue to the inauthenticity of the *Mariale*, which speaks of the Christ-Child as formed from Mary's " flesh and blood."

As mother, Mary supplied everything to the formation of Christ's body that all normal mothers supply. The virginal conception of Christ does not mean that Mary received, even miraculously, a biologically active role in the forming of her Son's body. But that conception should occur in a virgin is so much a sign of divine power that Albert uses a contempo-

rary comparison over and over again: it is as if a blind man should see without having his faculty of sight restored.

The Annunciation is commented on by Albert three times. He painstakingly investigates the possible sense of every phrase, " for everything is full of significance when it comes to this great Virgin Mother of God." The saint never tires of exploring our Lady's consent to God's invitation. So much does her perfect freedom mean to him, so taken is he by the fact that faith is a reasonable agreement (*rationabile obsequium*) that he does not speak of Mary as confirmed in grace, and will not have even concupiscence perfectly quelled, until after the Annunciation. In discussing the manner in which Gabriel's message was conveyed, Albert rejects an intellectual illumination as prejudicial to the full liberty of Mary's consent. God had prepared Mary for the divine maternity, yet it must be said that the Annunciation was " by way of inducing to consent."

In St. Albert's opinion, biologically Mary was passive in the generation of her Son, but psychologically and spiritually she was intensely active. Each order, natural and supernatural, receives its full due. Mary's faith deeply impresses the saint: " of such faith, that by faith she merited to conceive, and by faith became the foundation and support of the entire Church." Her faith was constant even on Calvary; Saturday is kept as Mary's day because she did not hesitate, when the others wavered at Christ's death and burial. St. Albert's analysis of Mary's maternal relationship to Christ emphasizes its personal character. Her maternal consent was a fully human act, and at the same time a supernatural one. Her act of faith and act of generation have the same goal—the Eternal Word.

In considering the Annunciation, as frequently throughout his writings, St. Albert discusses all aspects of the virginity—vow or conditioned vow before the Annunciation, virginal conception of Christ, virginal childbearing, and lifelong virginity. He extols the spiritual values of our Lady's virginity, as well as the corporeal integrity, miraculously preserved in the conception and bringing-forth of the Christ-Child. This reviewer finds Albert's treatment a sober defense of the miraculous meaning of *virginitas in partu,* about which Rev. Dr. Albert Mitterer has raised certain questions in recent years. (Cf. A. Mitterer, *Dogma und Biologie der heiligen Familie,* Wien, Verlag Herder, 1952.)

Even granting that medieval theologians were sometimes mistaken in their biology, as St. Albert was in holding the purely passive role of the maternal contribution to conception, I fail to see that incorrect biological notions significantly distorted St. Albert's thoughts on the *virginitas in partu.* With many of the Fathers, and the majority of his contemporaries, he holds an absence of labor pains at Bethlehem and the physical integrity of Mary in terms of preservation of the *sigillum virginitatis.* Both factors he regards as quite miraculous. And although he uses the comparison of

Christ's body emerging from the still-sealed tomb, he expressly rejects the view that Christ's body was somehow " spiritualized " in order to be born, and simply avoids the mass of apocryphal details that pried into the mystery. More significant still, and this is the factor that seems to be neglected in some of the questions Dr. Mitterer has raised, St. Albert is concerned with the theological sense of the mysterious *virginitas in partu*. He applied the " tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo," to Christ as bridegroom, and the womb of Mary as the bridal chamber. " And he came forth as the bridegroom from the bridal chamber of the womb, when born of her he did not spoil the integrity of the body of his mother, but rather consecrated and loved her as his spouse without spot or stain."

As " new Eve "—another frequent comparison of Albert's—Mary was spared at Bethlehem the curse laid on the first Eve and her descendants of bringing forth children in sorrow, even though she was to learn the cost of her motherhood of Christ in the delayed labor pains of her compassion at the foot of the cross.

The temporal birth of the Word should imitate his timeless generation. Like the eternal coming forth from the Father without change or corruption, so the birth of the Word-made-man should be without harm even to Mary's corporeal integrity. And, citing St. Augustine, Albert shows the *virginitas in partu* as a type of the virginity of the Church, which in baptism brings forth without sorrow its children according to the spirit.

What is our Lady's place in the plan of salvation? The question is relevant after excluding the *Mariale* from Albert's writings. The *Mariale* applies to our Lady the principle of *consortium*: Mary, new Eve, is the " helpmate like unto himself " to Christ, and soteriological value is assigned to her compassion on Calvary. Fries fails to find any of these *Mariale* notes in Albert's authentic writings, and argues emphatically that Albert did not attach to the blessed Virgin's association with her Son any soteriological import that would bear directly on the properly redemptive act consummated on Calvary. In modern terminology, she did not share proximately and directly in the objective redemption, but only remotely and indirectly; but she had and retains a significant place in subjective redemption, which is the application to individuals of the fruits of Christ's passion. Albert's strong sense of the spiritual maternity, and his emphasis on Marian mediation, include neither the later notion of a " proximate and direct share in the actual redemptive work of Christ," nor the recent theory of our Lady's representative role on Calvary. Unlike St. Thomas, St. Albert does not speak of a representative role of our Lady even at the Annunciation.

The stages of Mary's spiritual maternity and mediation are three: chiefly, the maternity of Christ himself, which she consented to as redemptive, and in which she became mother of the head and members of Christ's mystical

body (floruit gravidatione cordis, quo nos concepit, et corporis, quo filium Verbum incarnatum suscepit). The labor pains of the woman of Apocalypse 12 are Mary's suffering that Christ be born in men. Secondly, through her example she encourages men to imitate Christ. Albert has much to say about our Lady's example. After Christ himself, she is the standard according to which we will be judged. "We must walk in her footsteps." She is "the way, through which we go to Jesus." Her request at Cana shows her motherly perception "for the future children of the Church."

The third stage is her heavenly intercession, a most effective one, by which "she conceives in heaven and continually brings forth her only-begotten Son, whom she forms in all that they may come to the throne of God." Her fullness of grace, in its consummation as on earth, puts her at the service of sinners (plenitudo beatae virginis ad intercessionem peccatorum). How can men profit from this intercession? The answer is that Christ "gives those things necessary for salvation to all who honor his holy mother."

By her Assumption the blessed Virgin has been elevated to a share in the royal reign of Christ himself. She is queen of mercy—a favorite way Albert has of describing her. No one is excluded from her royal mediation. As *illuminatrix*, enlightener (one of the meanings given for the name, "Mary") she transmits to the angels and blessed the divine light that beatifies them. She protects the Church militant against enemies of salvation, communicating God's gifts of grace. The souls in purgatory look to her as the reconciler in whom God brought about salvation. She is the great sign that appeared in the heavens, the woman clothed with the sun, crowned with stars (the blessed), the moon (the Church militant) under her feet, for all divine light and life of the Church in heaven and on earth can be traced back to the Mother of the Redeemer. The *suffragium* of the glorious Virgin is as wide as the assistance (*adjutorium*) of the graces of God.

Is it any wonder then that for St. Albert devotion to the blessed Virgin, as he almost invariably calls her, is not an optional extra of Christian life? "Just as we wish to receive from her, so we must greet her." Therefore we will honor our queen and mother all the days of our life." Frequently he accomodates to our Lady Romans 16, 6, "Greet Mary who has labored much among you."

Die Gedanken des heiligen Albertus Magnus über die Gottesmutter sets forth many further points not covered in this review—aspects of the Assumption and Mary's glory in heaven, the true marriage of Mary and Joseph, Mary's holiness, her sanctification before birth (for St. Albert did not hold an immaculate conception), and a number of references to Mary's life of prayer. After surveying one by one the Marian content of the twenty-four writings, Fries concludes with a chapter on "The *Mariology*

of Albert the Great" (pp. 345-390). The saint himself essayed no such unit arrangement, but it flows without forcing from his theological reflections on the mystery of Mary. A shorter version of the conclusions of the final chapter can be found in the article by A. Fries, "Albert der Grosse," in *Lexikon der Marienkunde* (1957), Lieferung I, cc. 111-121.

The present excellent book is completed by a list of manuscript sources, a table of scriptural references, a list of authors mentioned (the study is full of cross-references to writings that influenced Albert, as well as to his influence on others), and finally a subject-index. In view of the use of this book as a reference tool, the indices are quite valuable. Few readers will have occasion to read *Die Gedanken . . .* straight through, so that the final extended summary chapter can well be read by itself.

If it seemed that Albert Fries, C. Ss. R., was playing an unwilling iconoclast in striking the *Mariale super missus est* and other titles from the authentic writings of St. Albert, the current assessment of the saint's theological thought on the Mother of God is an *amende honorable* to the devout genius who regarded theology as a science, "which chastely lives within the limits of the faith and does not fall into the dissolution of mere phantasy" (*quae casta stat intra limites fidei nec luxuriatur per phantasias*).

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Metaphysics and Ideology. By WM. OLIVER MARTIN. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1959. Pp. 104. $2.50.

Karl Marx once said, "the point is not to *know* the world; the point is rather to change it." This is an utterance of ideology. Whether there is or is not an objective truth—we do not really care. Our vital interest and concern is to agree on that set of ideas and thought patterns which most aptly answers the present need as pre-defined by the ideological system itself.

Mr. Aiken echoes the same refrain: "Whether such answers are 'cognitive' and 'true or false' in the scientific sense is unimportant. What does matter is that the pictures of reality which they present to us may enable us to organize our energies more adequately for the satisfaction of our total needs as men. Then they will be 'true' in the only sense of the term which is worth considering."

In this book, Dr. Martin warns us that we ought not to confuse ideology in this sense, with philosophy or Metaphysics (for the most part he uses the two terms interchangeably). All philosophy, even a false philosophy is

an endeavor to analyse, to know, to explain. Ideology, in accord with its own confessed purpose, disdains any attempt at knowing. To know is unimportant. Hence, an ideology is not really a false philosophy at all. To consider it as such, is to refuse to take is seriously. Ideology is anti-philosophy.

Dr. Martin then sharpens the contrast between philosophy and ideology. What is philosophy? he asks. How may it be recognized? The author answers this question by laying down four marks which, he insists, ought to characterize true philosophy. The marks are: a) autonomy b) continuity c) system d) adequacy.

a) Autonomy. This means that Metaphysics (here the word is used to signify the specific branch of philosophy) must possess " its own data, its own formal object." That is to say, it does not derive its subject matter from some other science. Moreover, Metaphysics is grounded in the experiential order of things, though it is not what we would term today, an " experimental " science. Without this first mark, Dr. Martin tells us, Metaphysics lapses into what would more properly be called ideology.

b) Continuity. In true philosophy some principles and truths will be recognized and upheld through whatever changes the system may undergo. There is at the same time an allowance for change and even improvement. Thus for example, through the course of time there may occur in the minds of the proponents of this " true philosophy " a gradual growth in the perception of the nature of man. If this development were to reach the point where the definition of man is substantially altered, then either the former is true and the latter false, or conversely. We would have an alternative between a correct understanding of what man really is, and a misconception. In Dr. Martin's words: " the revolution is within philosophy; it is not as yet the overthrow of philosophy in favor of ideology, which is anti-philosophy. . . . ideology (and hence anti-philosophy) would arise if one were to argue as follows; The concept, man[1], was useful in the process of organizing current impressions and interests of certain past ages, i. e., such interests as those of Heaven and Hell, the eternal perpetuating of one-self, etc. . . . Now the interests of contemporary man are in this world, not the next, and hence the urgency of secularizing religion demands more useful concepts than the traditional ones. For this reason the concept, man[2], is ' truer ' today."

c) System. True philosophy must bear the mark of " system," i. e. it must manifest an inner coherence. There ought to be no contradictions in data, nor in the principles rooted in the data. Yet the system is not " closed at both ends." By this Dr. Martin implies there must be room for variation, but the variation is not absolute. Some principles are immutable and essential; others are provisional. The " system " rises and

falls with the former; the latter may change " within the system." The author exemplifies his point: " For example, a first principle in moderate realism is that act accounts for potency. The denial of this destroys the whole system. On the other hand, consider the proposition: ' Accidents always actually inhere in any substance.' This may be denied, for some good reason, in favor of a proposition containing ' potentially inhere ' rather than ' actually inhere.' In this way we ' make room ' in our system for the mystery of the Eucharist." I think his point could have been more suitably illustrated without recourse to data outside the realm of reason, but at any rate his point is clear. Quite simply, " system " refers to a fundamental " sameness " with allowance being made for limited change. Historically, the " sameness " is termed continuity. Within the science itself it is system.

d) Adequacy. The last of the marks is tri-dimensional. Adequacy implies first of all that a true Metaphysics must be able to account for other kinds of knowledge, or at least allow for their possibility. A Metaphysics which would deny the possibility of material reality, for exampie, would succumb to the indictment of inadequacy. In addition to accounting for others forms of knowledge, Metaphysics must also be able to reflect back on its own data and processes by way of explication and defence. This is required because Metaphysics is " first philosophy " and hence can look to no other for defence. Lastly, Dr. Martin underscores what he refers to as the " existential criterion of adequacy." By this he means, metaphysical knowledge is not some ideal which can never be in fact achieved. It is not a non-existing norm the philosopher projects in order to judge the worth of the various existing systems. To assert this is to reduce Metaphysics to ideology. " For if metaphysical truth is always ' ideal,' then the so-called metaphysics that *exists* is not really *that* at all. It is really ideology."

Having established the four marks by which true metaphysics may be recognized, the author, as a good " apologete " now applies the criteria to the various claimants, to see if any might be found to " pass the test."

First he warns us, the work of no individual philosopher can fulfill the requirements. In such a case we would not have the mark of " system." No one man has all the answers in a totally final and decisive manner. In the work of any single man, the provisionary principles await improvement and possible development. In keeping with the note of " system " we are constrained to broaden our view to include streams of thought.

Next, Dr. Martin gives what in his mind is the only candidate found to measure up satisfactorily to the requirements. " We would suggest that what best meets the test of metaphysics as a science is the classical realistic tradition, or, to be more exact, what is sometimes called ' moderate realism,' the system that has had a development from Aristotle through St. Thomas

to the present." The best evidence for this judgment, he says, is the intuitive vision that it is so. There is also a negative approach. This entails an examination of the several more predominant brands of philosophy, noting how they each fail in one respect or another to " pass the test."

Pragmatism and positivism offer no difficulty, for they do not pretend to be metaphysical systems.

What of Platonism? The author rejects this on the grounds that it fails to comply with the mark of " adequacy." He admits however, that this point is debatable, and he prefers not to pursue the matter in this work.

Next in line comes " idealism," in the sense of Berkeley, Kant or Hegel. " The essence of modern idealism has consisted in identifying knowing and making or creating." This form of philosophy is found wanting in " autonomy." It is not experiential; it does not approach a subject of study; rather it produces it.

With regard to Naturalism or Materialism we must distinguish before passing judgment as to whether or not it merits the name of philosophy. If we mean by " materialism," the work of Democritus and his early followers, we may correctly refer to it as a metaphysics. It is of course, relatively inadequate; indeed it is a false metaphysics in the light of later development. We would not however term Democritus an ideologist. " He sought truth about what he conceived to be being, even going so far as to explain in terms of his atomism, the nature of that intuition whereby we see Reality as it actually is, and not merely as it is given to us in a distorted manner through sense experience."

When we look at the materialism of today, the situation is quite different. Here we find not a philosophy, but ideology. " ' Matter ' and ' method ' (the scientific method) are relevant to cognition only in the positive sciences. Otherwise, on a philosophical level, they are only instruments for ideological strategy and have nothing to do with cognition or with metaphysics as a science." This, Dr. Martin insists, is the verdict of the modern materialist on his own system of thought. " They do not confront the moderate realist with an alternative metaphysical system, they are not even talking about the same thing, they do not have the same purpose. Philosophically they only confront the realist with an ' attitude ' of being against him."

After this hasty review of the principal streams of thought as they appear in history, Dr. Martin now feels he has vindicated the claim of " moderate realism " by the process of elimination. ". . . metaphysics as a science is to be found only in classical realism, and that the moderate realism of the Aristotle-Aquinas tradition can be considered the most adequate expression."

True philosophy, true metaphysics is to be found only in moderate realism. What do we say of all the thinkers in history, and especially of the modern era who work outside the camp of moderate realism? On the

basis of what has been shown so far, they are not proponents of *true* philosophy. Are they therefore to be gathered under the one broad heading of " false philosophy "? The answer is no. Once again the distinction must be carefully drawn between philosophy, even if false, and ideology. ". . . an inadequate metaphysics is still metaphysics, and the proponent is a metaphysician, not an anti-philosopher. For example, Descartes, Spinoza, and Locke were philosophers, . . ." Their concern was to know, to explain. From the standpoint of realism we see their great errors. We could not however, in all justice, deny they were interested in knowing. They were philosophers.

Ideology is altogether different. Here there is not merely error in judgment. There is no attempt at judgment. Truth and error have worth to the extent that they are *useful.* Ideology denies the possibility of philosophy. Moreover, on the impossible supposition that there were such a thing, it would still be without value.

The author sums up " Was David Hume essentially a philosopher or an ideologist? He was a philosopher. Given the premises of Locke and Berkeley, that what we know are our ideas and that to be is to be perceived, Hume showed that the consequences land one in skepticism. And other things follow too, such as reason being the slave of the passions. And who will disagree? This is philosophical analysis of a rather keen sort. It does not make of Hume an ideologist. Even from the standpoint of Hume's intention the most that can be said is that Hume, among others, established the philosophical foundations of ideology. But if, instead of rejecting the premises, a person accepts the conclusions of Hume, thus denying all metaphysical truth, and then uses his reason as a slave of his feelings in order to construct a world in idea to satisfy some practical purpose, then that person becomes an ideologist and not a philosopher."

Existentialism in the pejorative sense is written off by Dr. Martin as ". . . the outcrying of a sick soul . . . and . . . prove nothing about, for, or against metaphysics as a science, or moderate realism in particular." He does admit that the school of moderate realism has been assigned the task of answering some of the questions raised by certain existentialists, and of pursuing certain of their leads. In this connection he reminds the reader that true philosophy is " open at one end," is able to absorb new ideas and develop new insights without prejudice to the required basic " sameness."

Dr. Martin concludes his " apologetic " with an appeal to present-day philosophers who find themselves outside the school of moderate realism. He calls upon them to study the claim of the *philosophia perennis,* assuring the prospective " convert " there will be no surrender of freedom. To guarantee this he invites a critique. " He may, if he so wishes, attempt a radical critique of Thomistic realism in the hope that his beginnings may in the future result in an alternative scientific metaphysics even more

adequate." He is quick to warn that ". . . a potential metaphysics is not as yet a live alternative to an actual one, namely, the twenty-five hundred years of realism."

In closing, the author reiterates his conviction that the distinction between philosophy and ideology must be maintained. Though the terms used by the one may materially coincide with those of the other, there is never a rapport.

Dr. Martin's attempt to show moderate realism as the only candidate possessing the " marks " requisite in any true philosophy may appear less than convincing to some. Is it really possible to " conclude " that realism is the only genuine form of philosophy? Is it not rather necessary to " see " that it is so? This is, of course, *the* epistemological problem. The realist may *defend* his system by showing up the defect in any argumentation opposing it. But he cannot appeal to anything as evidence for the justification of his position. There is no evidence for the evident. It seems any attempt at this sort of epistemology must ultimately beg the question, as the author himself admits.

The apologetic has value in the approach to Faith. Here the direction traveled is from the evident on one level of knowledge to an assent on another. It does not seem legitimate however, to employ this technique in the hope of bringing a " convert " to a recognition of the validity of what is in itself evident.

Dr. Martin's distinction between philosophy and ideology is, I think, an important one. It is a theme which merits more attention. Because of the limitation imposed on the author in a work of this type, some of the points in the course of his development are unfortunately unclear, and at times appear even facile. Despite these understandable shortcomings, his basic point emerges successfully with clarity.

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BRIEF NOTICES

Symposium on Evolution (held at Duquesne University, April 4, 1959). By Frederick C. Bawden, Gottfried O. Lang, Andrew G. van Melsen and Cyril Vollert, S. J., with an introduction by Bernard J. Boelen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1959. Pp. 119. $3.00.

Dr. Boelen opens this stimulating little series of lectures in commemoration of the centenary of Darwin's *Origin of Species* with the general theme of the Duquesne Symposium. Today, "this controversial book is no longer a menace, but has become a challenge," and the Symposium "was conceived to meet this challenge."

The first lecture of the *Symposium*, "Evolution and Viruses," is presented by Dr. Frederick C. Bawden, director of the Rothamsted Experimental Station for botanical research. After discussing what is presently known about the nature of the virus, he gives his reasons why viruses must be late products of evolution rather than primitive forms near the origin of life on the earth. He then theorises about the origin of viruses based upon their changes in transmissibility. The main contribution of viruses to evolutionary theory is their manifestation of the operation of natural selection. As a consequence, there is the possibility of discovering, with better techniques, a rich collection of transmissible factors like viruses but nonpathogenic, that is, beneficial to organisms in their development.

In his lecture "Human Organic Evolution: Fact or Fancy," the anthropologist Dr. Gottfried O. Lang reviews the contemporary fossil evidence for the evolution of the human body, and carefully describes the more common genetic interpretation of the fossil record. Accepting the record as it stands, and the modern neo-Darwinian evolutionary interpretation as the best explanation of the phenomenon of human bodily change both past and present, he excludes human psychological development from among those questions of origins which anthropology can legitimately consider. Finally, he evaluates this evolutionary theory in terms of predictability, simplicity and elegance, giving it a favorable, though not uncritical, judgment.

Dr. Andrew G. van Melsen, in his lecture "Philosophical Aspects of Evolution," discusses a host of important problems (1) the special nature of evolutionary theory and the limited value of "historical" arguments, (2) mechanistic versus vitalistic interpretation in biology, (3) the abstract nature of science, (4) the distinction between the animate and inanimate, brute animals and man, and (5) evolution and finality. His critical precision in isolating the problem of reconciling specific natures and differential behavior with an apparent gradual undifferentiated process of genetic origins is not matched, unfortunately, by a solution of equal force and clarity.

He proposes that our traditional method of defining *matter, life, sensation, growth, intelligence, spirit*, etc. by mutually exclusive categories is faulty and a result of our incorrect schematizing way of thinking. His illustration of the way in which we should think, by a kind of analogous extrapolation, of all matter "knowing" how to act and react, creates more problems than it solves. To say that "higher forms in nature (plants, animals and man) are not higher because of the addition to matter of entirely new principles or factors, they are higher forms because of the unfolding of something already present in matter" (p. 73) raises the issue of monism, as the author notes. This view becomes especially critical in discussing the advent of the human spirit. His solution of the problem by the use of extrapolation and vague analogy will not altogether satisfy traditional philosophers.

The final lecture entitled "Evolution and the Bible" by Father Cyril Vollert, S. J. is a very thorough and competent treatment of the biblical account of the origin of man and woman and the relationship of the Christian revelation to the evolutionary hypothesis. He discusses in clear detail the biblical view of the origin of the universe, the origin of the first man and woman, and, bringing all the recent papal documents to bear on the questions, carefully distinguishes the religious truths there presented from the manner in which they are proposed.

He concludes that Sacred Scripture neither teaches nor rejects evolution, and he adds that the same can be said for the Fathers: they observe strict neutrality. There are, however, some zones of obscurity and discord between science and revelation still unsettled. Open to discussion are (1) the manner of the "special creation" of man and the adaptation of the body, (2) continuity versus discontinuity in the advent of man on the cosmic scene, (3) the infusion of spirit into adult or embryo, (4) paradise man versus primitive man, and finally, (5) monogenism versus polygenism.

In his conclusion, Father Vollert reiterates the theme of the *Symposium*, that though caution should be exercised in these deep and important matters, evolutionary theory should not engender in the Christian either disquiet or alarm. This is a peaceful and reassuring note, to be sure, but in looking back over the entire *Symposium*, the reader may wonder at the absence from the discussion of those issues which caused the late Pope Pius XII such disquiet and alarm. There is a false, but easy, step from biological evolution to *evolutionism*, that "monistic and pantheistic opinion that the world is in continual evolution," and thence to those erroneous philosophies which are inspired or augmented by this opinion, namely, *materalism, existentialism* and *historicism* (*Humani Generis*).

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Modern Gloom and Christian Hope. By Hilda Graef. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1959. Pp. 143. $3.50.

From the plan of this very timely book, it is seen that Miss Graef indicates modern gloom as represented notably in existentialism (especially in the writings of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Anouilh, Simone de Beauvoir, and Françoise Sagan), the "angry young men" (especially in the writings of John Osborne and Colin Wilson), and three Catholic authors (namely Gabriel Marcel, Mauriac, and Greene), and then shows that Christian hope is the basic answer to this problem.

Possibly the most important point established by the author is that modern gloom is traceable to neurosis, since thereby she suggests that the writings of the existentialists and similar authors may be clinical syndromes rather than sources of information about any reality other than the truth concerning mental illness. Indeed, these writings are examples of logical supposition and judgment in the mind of the neurotic or the psychotic and can thereby aid the psychologist towards specific definition at least of neurosis and psychosis. Miss Graef does not pursue this point, since it is not directly related to the question of Christian hope as a remedy for modern gloom.

However, a more precise investigation of the sources of this gloom may have revealed that modern warfare is quite accidental to its development. A more direct occasion is found in the luxury and sophistication existing before and after wartime, since these more directly attack hope, the absence whereof is a characteristic of both neurosis and psychosis. The reason for this is that luxury and sophistication remove the desire for the *arduous* good. When war and its aftermath come, then, the luxurious and sophisticated person has no sufficient purpose for sustaining the difficult evils of war. A neurosis or psychosis initiated in the time of peace, therefore, becomes more intense in the time of war; it does not, however, begin in the circumstance of war.

In the final chapter, entitled "Modern Gloom and Christian Hope," Miss Graef indulges in a rhetoric wherein the observations have little, if any, coherence. Had she pursued her subject more thoroughly, she could have indicated the commonly applicable therapies aimed at the development of Christian hope. In this way, she could have maintained her purpose of writing for the general public and yet provided some practical directive for coping with the problem of modern gloom.

Nevertheless, from the foregoing it is clear that Miss Graef has indicated the basic answer to the problem of modern gloom, since the aim of the spiritual director and the psychiatrist must be the establishment of hope. In this regard, she is to be congratulated upon her excellent choice of texts indicating the basic ill, as well as her interspersed, sagacious observations

on matters in these texts, and especially upon her consideration of two poets who passed from an existentialist status to the status of Christian hope, namely, T. S. Eliot and Paul Claudel.

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